

Drop Out of School, Drive Without License, or Submit to Parents?

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Question: Several weeks back, you'll remember, that I talked about: show me in the Bible where it says that. Well, again, these are the kind of questions where with the exception of maybe one of them, we can't go to chapter and verse. Remember, we talked about the mature Christian doesn't walk just by: show me a rule. We have to apply the principles of Scripture. And you're going to get that feel as we look at these questions that have been asked. But you face the same kind of things in your life.

First one: The first two are related. But this comes up a lot. We've got a lot of young people here and so I think this could be helpful. From Andrew: He says, "I love Christ, but I have two questions that kind of mix together." I'm not sure how they mix together. And I'm not going to deal with the second one because it's kind of off. Anyway, I'm just going to deal with this first one here. He says this, "I want to give up high school, but at the same time, I want to obey my parents who want me to do well." And I'm assuming what he means is they want me to do well in high school. "I want to give up high school, but I want to obey my parents, who want me to do well..." The assumption is: in high school. "What do I do?"

Discussion:

Tim: So what do you say? Apply Scripture. Be discerning. Sometimes, like I've told you before, when people ask questions - just because they ask questions, sometimes doesn't even mean that their question is valid. I've told you all before, people will say this: Well, I'm a Christian. I know I'm a Christian. I believed three years ago. How can I be practicing sexual immorality? You know, sometimes people's questions are not even valid. They're not even legitimate. They're faulty. There's false assumptions. Sometimes as I've pointed out before, we need more information. Sometimes you need to examine the question and ask questions of the question and make certain assumptions, or fill in some empty spaces before you can actually give valid answers. So here you've got apparently a young man. I would just assume this: that he's of age in whatever state he lives. That he could drop out of high school and it wouldn't be illegal. His issues here are not apparently with the government or with laws. His issues seem to be with his parents. He wants to give up high school. He says, "I love Christ." "I love Christ. I want to give up high school. I want to obey my parents. My parents want me to do well." And I'm assuming in high school. "What do I do?"

(from the room) He should probably obey his parents.

Tim: Right there, "He ought to obey his parents." That would be the first thing to do. If you're a child, let's ask this question: Give me some biblical basis for saying the first thing he should do is obey his parents. Now, it doesn't necessarily mean the end of the answer is that he should

obey his parents, because we could probably think of situations where you shouldn't obey parents. In fact, I could probably create scenarios with a high school that it might not even be right to obey your parents if they wanted you to go to that high school. But just for starters, can we say that in all of life - let's think here. Let's break this thing down. When I'm dealing with my parents, it's not just me and my parents. The Lord is in that equation.

So think with me here. I've got my will. I've got my parents' will. And I've got the Lord's will. Now a lot of times as children, we have parents. Problems arise with those three wills. What are the potential problems? (Incomplete thought) You've got me. You've got my parents. You've got the Lord. You've got my will, their will... because that's really what it comes down to. It's not just the three of us - it's our wills. What we want to do; what we don't want to do. I've got my will. I've got my parents' will. I've got the Lord's will. Where does the conflict tend to arise in that mixture of three wills?

(from the room) Isn't my will irrelevant? And it's just the Lord's will and then my parents in an authoritative state?

Tim: Oh, no, our will is never irrelevant. Scripture says that it's God Who works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. We are applying our will - in fact, even as we seek to discern things, what I'm going to do is I'm going to take the information and eventually I'm going to process that information and now my will is going to act on that information. See, this young man, he's trying to figure out between his will, his parents' will, and the Lord's will what he should do and given the information, then he's going to act on that. Our will's very much involved, because we are the people in the end who are going to make the decision about whether we're going to do one thing or do the other. (Incomplete thought) What's the goal? With those three wills involved, what's the goal? Honor the Lord. The goal is that our will be in line with the Lord's, no matter what our parents' will is. That's the ultimate objective here. But where do the problems tend to arise in this three-willed deal?

(Unintelligible)

Tim: The parents and who?

(unintelligible)

Tim: So typically what you see, there's typically problems on two ends. Either one, we tend to not honor our parents and don't care enough about their will. The other problem is we care too much about our parents' will and dishonor the Lord's will. Those are the two ways. Think about it. What are some good examples, like perhaps this guy right here? His will, his parents' will. He wants to do his thing. His parents are against him. He could just blow them off and do whatever he thinks he wants to. (Incomplete thought) And you know what happens, you don't like what your parents want, so you imagine the Lord wants what you want. So you basically make the Lord line up with you because you don't like what your parents want. But also, Jesus, on more

than one occasion talks about our parents having too much sway in our life to where we need to follow Him rather than the way of our parents. So, I would say this, by default, like unless circumstances indicate otherwise, by default, we should obey our parents. Can anybody substantiate that claim?

(from the room) I think of Romans 13 where it says every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities, for there's no authority except for God, and those which exist are established by God.

Tim: That is probably dealing more with government. But I mean, taken in the broadest sense, you could include parents in some of those statements there. That text itself, the context there probably is speaking more so of the government. But how about some texts that deal very specifically with parents?

(from the room): Ephesians 6

Tim: Ok, and read that.

(from the room) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Tim: And then keep going.

(from the room) "Honor your father and mother," (for this is the first commandment with a promise).

Tim: So he actually goes back to the 5th commandment in the Ten Commandments. Now, somebody might say there, well, he's speaking to little children. At what point do the children of parents have a right to no longer honor, respect, obey their parents?

(from the room) Should children have to obey their parents if it's sin?

Tim: If it's sin. Because obviously that would be a situation where my parents are at odds with the Lord. But can you think of anything especially in the New Testament, where you actually have adults who are being reprimanded for not having honored their parents properly? The Pharisees. How about Matthew 15. Somebody turn there. I think it's right at the beginning of the chapter. Matthew 15. If it's not the first verse, it's very close to the beginning of the chapter I believe. Somebody want to read that? That was where they had their corban rule - I don't know how it comes across in all the translations, but somebody read that account.

(from the room) It's the Pharisees saying they break the law by not washing their hands before they eat. And Jesus replies, "Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'honor your father and mother,' And, 'anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.'"

Tim: Yeah, basically, He's pressing this even on adults. Now, the question comes up oftentimes, well, come on, if I'm an adult should my parents be allowed to rule my life? I would say no. Whether you're a child or you're an adult, you're in a position that the Lord should rule your life. But, obviously, as the Lord rules your life, having a very high regard for your parents is something that Jesus faulted the religious leaders for not properly doing. On the other hand though, somebody says, let me go bury my father. You understand that doesn't mean there was a funeral going on. The idea was the son stayed at home until the father died. And that was expected. In a lot of countries, that's why they want sons. That's why they kill so many girls. That's why they abort so many girls. That's why in so many countries where the children are limited - boy, there's numerous countries.

You can think of China. I watched something on the Balkan's where it's almost a curse in some of those Balkan countries to have a daughter first. They want sons. Not just because the son's going to carry on the name, but because the son's going to care for them. If you have daughters, they go off - you know, like Charity. She's just going to go off somewhere else. She disappears. If Joshua gets married, you know, he's kind of the guy in the driver's seat. But of course, in those days, they often stayed right there in the same home. And Jesus says, "let the dead bury their dead." And that's a strong statement. And then it's interesting, the very next verse, when you're dealing with this in Luke 9 - "I just want to go home and say goodbye." And it's just like your family affections better not take your hand off the plow.

That's the real issue there in that context. Of course, He says in Matthew 10, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. And He says a son is going to be against his father. I know this, that if our desire is to follow the Lord, it's going to bring a sword. Especially if you don't have saved parents, it's going to bring a sword. There's going to be some difficulty. But at the same time, honoring those parents is something that is not cancelled out. You see, there's a tension there. We feel like, wow, let the dead bury their dead? Does that seem like you're honoring the parents?

Well, listen. We don't even want to make the will of the Lord and the will of our parents even close. It's the will of the Lord. The will of the Lord takes the day. But here's what you would have to ask yourself: Is there anything about going to high school that would be in opposition to the Lord? See, that's what really has to be asked. Like when I read this, "I want to give up high school, but at the same time, I want to obey my parents who want me to do well. What do I do?" Well, I wrote an arrow there. I want to give up high school. And I wrote an arrow there: Why? You need to talk to the guy more. Why do you want to give it up? Well, if he says, (incomplete thought) they are sending me to school and I get 8 hours of evolution and I have a teacher who's a pedophile... whatever. There could be reasons that yes, he should not be going to that school. Because he doesn't give an answer, I just get the sense that he just doesn't like school. And his parents want him to do well. If it's a matter of laziness, or if it's a matter of I just don't like having to put forth that work, or his parents fear what he's going to amount to if he doesn't get an education.

Where's he going to end up in life? Hey look, there are people who don't finish college educations or high school educations, who do extremely well in this world. But, let me tell you this, the vast majority of drop-outs don't. Why? Because it's a picture of failure. It's a picture of laziness and an unwillingness to work at something hard and just applying oneself. It's typically not an indication of something that's good. I think, what Sid, you dropped out like two weeks before you were going to graduate? But see, his father's health was declining and he had a family business. And the whole Sytsma clan, they're all very business minded. I don't think John got one either, did he? Oh, he did.

(from the room) I never needed my diploma - never, ever, ever.

Tim: But, you can't fault Sid - Sid's a hard worker. And you know, if this guy for some reason has a crazy high school and they're teaching him sinful things and it's just a temptation there and it's not healthy and he really does want to finish and he's willing to take the exam and get his GED and he wants to start taking college courses online or whatever... Still, in all of it, unless there's something overt here, he should obey his parents. I mean, that would be right to obey them. And I suspect that the reasons he wants to not do it, probably are not good. I'm making assumptions there. And I suspect that the reasons that his parents want him to finish it probably are legitimate and good. That's just my take. Like I said, you've got to fill in some of the gaps without having more information.

(from the room) So are there other times where it might be excusable or permissible?

Tim: Well, here's the thing. You have the fifth commandment. You have a commandment with promise. And you might catch that: A commandment with a promise. Listen, I've said this many times, but Hudson Taylor was of the mindset that he would not receive anybody into the China Inland Mission unless their parents approved. And he had some cases where he desperately wanted laborers, and he had good, solid laborers come apply, but their parents were not willing that they should go, and he wouldn't take them. I just had a young man come to me who's been talking to me about the foreign mission field. And he said there's some issues with his parents. And he said, yeah, that commandment with promise is that you'll live long, and he's got it in his conscience right now that if he were to go against their will, he's afraid he'd probably die over there. And you know what, that might be very valid expectation. (incomplete thought)

Look, our lives should be lived so that we are honoring and giving great respect to our parents. And that should be the default reaction. It should only be in processing that you - if you process this thing and you come to some conclusion that the Lord obviously wants you to do something different than what your parents want you to do. But you want Scripture, you want counsel, you want prayer, you want to be asking the Lord to guide you with His eye (Psalm 32) - you want that. You want His guidance. There's safety in counsel, even a multitude. And you want Scriptural support. Why? Because Scripture is God's will. That's what you're trying to discern. What is God's will in this thing? Well, God's will most of the time is for you to follow your parents'

will. And you know, most parents have the good of their children - I recognize you can get evil parents; I've known of a mother that didn't want her daughter to marry that guy because that guy's a Christian. And she wasn't, and her daughter was. And she just hated Christians. Well, of course, that's not a valid reason. Of course, if her daughter's going to marry, she needs to marry a Christian. But this next one now, you guys are going to solve. So what's the answer for the other guy? The answer for the other guy - basically given my assumptions, I would tell the guy, if he was a young person in the church, given the assumptions I made, I'd tell him work hard. Finish high school. Honor your parents. The Lord's blessing will be upon that. Unless he brought up some facts about the high school that were big, obvious reasons why he needs to get out of that situation.

Second Question:

So here's one - you guys are going to answer this one. Put your thinking caps on. "Hey, I am 17 - birthday in September. I want to get my license, but my parents don't care. They are unbelievers. They allowed me - even told me to drive. And I realize lately that I've been sinning (I think). But they want me to wait until I'm 18 to get my license, and want me in the meantime to drive to work with my dad building fences mostly. We live out in the country. I don't want to sin toward God by driving, but also not obey my parents. What should I do? I think it might be ok, because we live in a very small community out in the country, and the closest town is very small. What should I do?"

Discussion:

Tim: So, the situation's obvious. He's 17. He doesn't have a driver's license. Obviously, the government would demand that he have a license. But his parents are telling him - they're putting pressure on him - his dad especially - to drive, and it doesn't sound like he's in a position where he can just opt out of driving. He is involved with work. And he drives to work. Now this guy might not even be in high school anymore. But he builds fences with his dad. They live out in the country. So, you guys tell him what to do.

(from the room) Call the sheriff. Tell your situation to him, and he may give you a good conscience and say well, that's ok. Or he may go visit your parents.

Tim: See, I thought you were going to say this: Call the sheriff. Tell him what your dad's making you do. Go jump in the truck. And have that sheriff pull you over. And both you and the sheriff are in it together, and the sheriff is going to drag you home to your dad, and the sheriff is going to put his finger on the throat of your dad and say, "Boy, you better get that boy licensed. If I catch him on the road again, I'm coming after you." That's what I think should happen.

(from the room) If he's got that type of sheriff, that sounds like a good idea.

Tim: Any other ideas on that one? Let's suppose he doesn't have a sheriff like that. Let's suppose he'd be terrified to call the sheriff and even ask about such things.

(from the room) Well, I think James hit on it, perhaps for conscience's sake, you could say I can't drive because it's violating my conscience because we're breaking the law here. And then the dad would either have to say break the law specifically or say I understand, you have a strong conscience, and he would say we've got a great kid here. That's what I would recommend.

Tim: So he needs to stand up to his dad.

(from the room) For conscience's sake, respectfully.

Tim: He needs to respectfully stand up to his dad. On what basis?

(from the room) For the law. Say dad, this is the law. You always taught me to obey the law.

Tim: Ryan mentioned the text from Romans 13. So, we are called to submit to the governing authorities. So I have a responsibility to submit to the law. My dad is telling me to break the law, which God obviously wants me to keep. And so my dad's not only going against the government, my dad's going against God. And so, I need to stand up to my dad. Of course, standing up to a dad - especially some kinds of dad's... But, no matter what his dad's like, if he's a Christian, he should stand up to him rather than do wrong. And suffer the consequences. Is that right?

(from the room) For conscience's sake, yeah.

Tim: So rather than violate conscience, even if your dad's going to beat you up, you should stand up to him.

(from the room) Say if, another example, you dad encourages you to lie on your taxes. Say you're an adult. Well, you don't do that. You stand up.

Tim: Even if your dad's going to beat you up?

(from the room) I would say yes.

Tim: I just wanted to get you guys to say it. Because yes, of course. Isn't that what goes into the Gospel? The sword comes in the family. What's the idea? The sword - you're going to have problems. (Incomplete thought) What does Luke 14 say? How does it word it? What does Jesus say concerning parents in Luke 14? (Incomplete thought)

(from the room) If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father...

Tim: Wow... hate his own father.

(from the room) ...and wife and children and brothers and sisters and yes, even his own life, cannot be My disciple.

Tim: What sort of speech is that? When you exaggerate?

(from the room) Hyperbolic.

Tim: Hyperbolic. Why is hyperbole used? Why say something that if you boiled it down to the exact literal sense would probably go against a multitude of things God tells you. Which we understand that form of speech. Why is hyperbole used? What's its intent? To drive home a point. Right. And you know the thing is, even with the government, what happened when the disciples said we ought to obey God rather than man? What did the Sanhedrin do to them? Beat them. Yeah, here's the thing. God calls upon us to do right. But we also need to be ready to take the consequences of doing right. And so yes, these men are right. It's wrong to drive without a driver's license. Now, seriously, could a creative young man do something like call the sheriff and tell his situation? If the sheriff ended up coming and not playing along with the boy, dad might not appreciate that he went behind his back like that. But something like that could be creatively constructive I guess. But yes, however this thing works out, whether you can get somebody in a position of authority who's backing you up like a sheriff, or whether you have to go yourself, I think the way you go is you go humbly and you go with Scripture. And you show, dad, I want to respect you and I want to honor you, but the Lord wants me to obey the government. And you're asking me to disobey the government. Please, dad. Just let me get my driver's license so that I can work with you and I can drive with you and I can do it legally. I think if you do it with the right spirit, that doesn't mean there might not be consequences. That doesn't mean it might not provoke the dad. But I think with the right attitude and the right approach... There are proverbs that talk about - I know that there's "a soft answer turns away wrath." What's the other one? There's one that says a (what) is persuasive? Is it Proverbs 16? (Incomplete thought) It's something is persuasive. Can somebody look that up? What is it? Proverbs 16:21? And it says?

(from the room) Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.

Tim: Oh, isn't that a good one? So, there you go. You give that to the young man. Go armed with that verse and approach your dad with sweetness of speech.

(from the room) And one text in all of this I was thinking of was Mark 3. Even if this guy's parents seized him and said you're out of your mind, well the exact same thing happened to Jesus Christ. Imagine Mary telling Jesus You're out of your mind. And that actually happened. Yet, He wanted to do the will of His Father.

Tim: Right.

(from the room) So it's not any different than what Christ went through, even with His own mother.

Tim: Yeah, and Jesus said if they treated Him in a certain way, or they called Him certain things, or they did certain things in a persecuting fashion, they're going to do the same to you. Ok.