

OBEDIENCE

John 14:15-21

Erma Bombeck wrote about having the meanest parents in all the world:

I had the meanest parents in all the world. When I was seven years old, they dared to spank me just because I told them I would not do what they asked me to do to help around the house. My friend next door never got spanked. He didn't have to help at home. He had nice parents.

I had the meanest parents. I had to eat all my broccoli and carrots before they would ever let me have dessert. My friend next door never had to eat vegetables. He had fast food brought in with burgers and shakes and brownies with all kinds of ice cream.

I had the meanest parents. They made me go to church every Sunday as long as I lived under their roof, sit there in that boring worship service. My friend next door could do as he pleased. He never went to church. Sunday was a fun day for him.

I had the meanest parents. They made me work for my allowance. I had to get a job helping an elderly old man with chores around his house. My friend next door never had to do anything and he was given four times as much allowance as I could ever earn. He had nice parents.

I had the meanest parents. When I turned sixteen, they made me earn points before I could drive the family car. My friend next door was given a brand-new luxury automobile. My folks had bought an old jalopy for me to get back and forth to school, but you think I'd drive that hunk of junk and park it beside those Jeep Wagoneers, BMWs, Buicks, and Mercedes? My friend had it made.

Or so I once thought, but, when we reached age thirty, I had a change in perspective. I had learned that my parents were not so mean after all. I was experiencing: the pleasure of work, the reward of recreation, the strength of a healthy body, the bonds of a strong marriage, the inward confidence that comes from faith and the wonderful supportive fellowship that comes from the Church as a community of believers.

As for my friend, things were not going so well: he was not finding his niche in the workplace, nothing seemed to satisfy him, he was having difficulty getting along with people who were not willing to do everything just as he thought he knew it ought to be done, his marriage had not lasted even two years, his body was getting out of shape, and he evidenced a cynical outlook without any under-girding that comes from the assurance of faith.

Erma came to understand that obedience to her parents' ways instilled in her lasting, life-giving values. "If you love me, obey..." Obedience. Do we keep Jesus' commandments? Do we put God first in our lives and love others as Christ loves us? Do your actions reveal Christ to others? I pray they do.

God bless,
Pastor Barbara