

"P.K.'s" or "GO AHEAD, MAKE MY DAY!"

TEXT: 3 Jn. 4

THESIS: To show the relationship between parents and children and between a pastor and his people, and the goal of the ministry.

INTRO.: A. "P.K.'s" (Preacher's Kids) and "M.K's" (Missionary's Kids) have a reputation for not behaving themselves. Perhaps this is because they are just bad, or perhaps it is because they are in the spotlight all the time, so people notice their mistakes more readily, or maybe it is because they just imitate the actions of the other kids in the church their dad's pastor.

B. But this message is not really about the "P.K.'s" (Preacher's Kids) we usually think about, but about the Kids of all Parents and the *spiritual* offspring of Pastors.

TRANS.: John is the last remaining Apostle. He had pastored and preached for many years. He refers to himself as "the elder" and then addresses his spiritual "children" in the church to which he writes and says "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." He is no doubt reminiscing over his past life and ministry and as he looks back he pinpoints the one thing which brings him the most joy. In effect he says to his spiritual children "GO AHEAD, MAKE MY DAY!" – "walk in truth," – that's all I desire. No doubt parents desire the same thing for their earthly children, John desires for his spiritual children...

I. P.K.'s : PARENT'S KIDS (An application of the text)

A. A Joy Peculiar to Christian Parents:

1. Unless a parent "walks in truth" he will have no joy if his children do.

- a. No wolf prays for its offspring to become a sheep or vice-versa.
- b. No parent will value his children's soul unless he values his own.

ILLUS.: Godly Abraham prayed for his son Ishmael, but here is no record that Ishmael ever prayed for his son Nebajoth! Unsaved parents (and some carnal Christians) take joy or pleasure if their children obtain worldly fame or acclaim but care little if they "walk in truth."

2. Unless a parent "walks in truth" he will not attempt to lead his children to do so.

ILLUS.: Otherwise he would be hypocritical! The parent must set the example. If a parent shows he is more interested in material things than spiritual, so it will be with the children.

B. A Joy Special in It's Object:

1. Parents must train and persuade their children toward spiritual things.
2. Parents must have as their first priority the souls of the children God has entrusted to their care.

ILLUS.: The day of salvation of a child should be a joyous occasion indeed. It is better to kill the fatted calf before the child becomes a prodigal than afterward! Show your joy and make a big deal over your child's salvation, baptism, membership, etc. even more than their birthday, graduation, sports, etc.

Happy Abraham to be followed by an Isaac! Happy David to be followed by a Solomon! Happy Lois to have Eunice for a daughter and happy Eunice to have Timothy for a son. "No greater joy..." No greater burden than children who do NOT "walk in truth." There is no cross so heavy as a living cross. "A wise son maketh a glad father." *Prov. 10:1* "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame...Correct thy son & he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." *Prov. 29:15,17*

II. P.K.'s: PREACHER'S KIDS (An Exposition of the Text)

ILLUS.: John was not talking about his family in the flesh, but the souls entrusted into his care in the ministry. He was talking about his spiritual children: those he had won to Christ and/or those he had pastored over the years.

A. The Tie Between A Pastor & His Family: "...my children"

1. Earthly relationships are dissolved at death: "...there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage in heaven"
2. Spiritual relationships are more binding.

ILLUS.: We who are bound together in this life "in Christ" will forever be brothers and sisters in eternity. I suggest that our true relatives are those of the spirit. Spiritual children are those for whom the pastor must one day give an account.

Hebrews 13:7, 17 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

B. The Triumph Of A Pastor And His Family: **"no greater joy than to HEAR..."**

1. The flock should share spiritual victories with their pastor (or former pastor),

ILLUS.: One of the things that spawned this message was the opportunity I had recently visiting with a former deacon and his wife from my ministry in Glen Burnie, Md. (In fact this is the text of the last message I preached to that congregation!) He is 92 and she is 88 and it is wonderful that they have kept in touch over the years and they are still serving God and are helping to start a new church at their age. They are serving the Lord now just as they did then.

Another former member & deacon of that ministry called recently and shared that they were having many physical problems, but he still preaches in a nursing home (she has to drive him because of poor eyesight), and together they are still very active in their local church.

I recently received an e-mail from a lady who got saved in my former church in Fairless Hills, PA – 30 years ago! She thanked me for preaching the Gospel. Another lady from that church recently sent a card expressing her joy that she got saved in a Daily Vacation Bible School we held when she was only 7 years old. Along with the card was a handsome check for my ongoing ministry!

2. The pastor is overjoyed with the testimony of others regarding his flock.

ILLUS.: Every pastor gets nervous when he hears the words: "I know so & so who is a member of your church!" You don't know what is coming next. John had heard good things about Gaius (v.1) and others in this church and it brought him great joy! (v.4)

C. The Target Of A Pastor And His Family: **"...that my children walk in truth"**

1. The Pastor's aim is to lead folks to **"walk in truth."**
2. The Pastor's arrow is the Word of God... **"truth."**

a. We must identify **"the truth" (v.1)** (there is a body of doctrine referred to as **"the truth"** and **"the faith"** referred to again and again in the Scriptures & that is the focus of the faithful man of God & should be the desire of the faithful flock of God).

ILLUS.: I have tried diligently to use faithfully the blessed Word of God to deliver **"the truth"** in nearly 60 years of ministry. I know where **"the truth"** is found and have tried to faithfully deliver its message to you.

- b. We must **"walk in the truth" (v.4)** (we must be doers, not just hearers of "the truth.")
- c. We need to be **"fellowlaborers to the truth" (v.8)**

ILLUS.: V.4-8 Praise the Lord for those who give of their time, talents, labors, ministry, gifts and money to the Lord's work. Bus workers, S.S. teachers and helpers, Children's church workers, nursery & toddler workers, meal servers, kitchen workers, C-Club workers, coaches, youth workers, etc., etc., etc.

Praise the Lord for those who gave something to help Pastor & Mrs. Carl LoTurco last Wed. night!

Any success I have had in this ministry I owe to folks like you who have been **"fellowlaborers to the truth."**

- d. We need to have **"a good report...of the truth" (v.12)** (i.e., a clean testimony)

ILLUS.: John adds his testimony to that of others in the church and outside the church regarding the testimony of a man named Demetrius in the church. All through my ministry there have been certain people I can recall who have had an outstanding testimony as to faithfulness, loyalty, steadfastness and service. There were the Hollys in my first church in Walton, N.Y., the Rows in my 1st full time ministry in DeRuyter, N.Y., the Ringroses in Glen Burnie, Md., and a number of folks in this church who come to mind. Are YOU one of those whom I will remember as being among this number?! Or were you more like Diotrophes?!

v. 9-10 If I were writing an epistle would I include your name as a Gaius, a Demetrius or as a Diotrophes?

If folks not only listen to "the truth" but also walk in it then the pastor's job has not been in vain! May it honestly be said of each one under this ministry that you **"walk in truth."** What "greater joy" could there be for the pastor? You are all my brothers & sisters in Christ. My concern for my spiritual family is greater than those in my natural family.

CONCL.: God has given the pastor and his people a unique and precious relationship. As the head of the home rejoices when his earthly children behave and bring joy to his heart, so the pastor delights in hearing of the spiritual progress of his "children" in Christ. And the heavenly Father likewise when He hears of His spiritual children "walking in truth."

Children need to bring joy to their **parent's** hearts. **Church members** need to bring joy to their **pastor's** heart. **Christians** need to bring joy to their **Savior's** heart. **"GO AHEAD, MAKE MY DAY!"** How are YOU doing?