

[Musonius Rufus - suite]

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MUSONIUS RUFUS

101

in order that those earlier born may inherit greater wealth—by such a deed of wickedness planning prosperity for their surviving children. That these may have a greater share of their father's goods, their parents rob them of brothers, never having learned how much better it is to have many brothers than to have many possessions. For possessions inspire intrigue on the part of the neighbors, but brothers discourage intriguers. And possessions need support, but brothers are the strongest supporters. One cannot compare a good friend to a brother nor the help which others, friends and equals, give to that which a brother gives. What good would one compare to the good will of a brother as a pledge of security? What better disposed sharer of common goods could one find than a good brother? Whose presence in misfortune would one desire more than such a brother's? For my part I consider the man most enviable who lives amid a number of like-minded brothers, and I consider most beloved of the gods the man who has these blessings at home. Therefore I believe that each one of us ought to try to leave brothers rather than money to our children so as to leave greater assurances of blessings.

XVI

MUST ONE OBEY ONE'S PARENTS UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES?

A certain young man who wished to study philosophy, but was forbidden by his father to do so, put this question to him: "Tell me, Musonius, must one obey one's parents in all things, or are there some circumstances under which one need not heed them?" And Musonius replied, "That everyone should obey his mother and father seems a good thing, and I certainly recommend it. However, let us see what this matter of obedience is, or rather, first, what is the nature of disobedience, and let us consider who the disobedient person is, if in this way we may better understand what the nature of obedience is.

Now then, take this case. If a father who is not a physician and not experienced in matters of health or sickness should prescribe for his invalid son something which was harmful and injurious, and the son was aware of that fact, surely in not following his

20-23 Aulus Gellius (*Noct. Att. II, 7*) tells us that this was a favorite topic for discussion by the philosophers.

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