

Ephesians 6

Ephesians 6.1-4 – The role of fathers in the family (relation of parents and children)

V1 – The First Century view of children was very bad

- See William Barclay's commentary on Ephesians, p. 175 – a letter from First Century Roman soldier to his wife
- He told her if their expected child was a boy, let him live, but if a girl, she was to cast her out into wilderness and let her starve
- A Roman father had the right to sell his children into slavery and even to put them to death
- What view did Jesus have of children?** Of great value – See *Matthew 19.14*, where he called the little children to himself
- Paul then was walking in the footsteps of Jesus
- What is the difference between “obey” and “submit”?** Submit = to resent it, under coercion or force
- In other words, children are to willingly obey their parents
- The phrase “*in the Lord*” has been given a lot of discussion down through the years
- The message: When older children obey the gospel, they in effect become brothers and sisters of their parents in a spiritual sense, but they still have to obey their parents
- Another idea: “*in the Lord*” = as long as it is Scriptural
- Why are children to obey their parents?** Because it is right - what a powerful way to put it
- Children always want to know why they have to do something, and here is a good answer for them: Because it is right. Period.
- Sometimes we can't explain to children what they cannot understand – they keep asking why
- So in obeying our parents, we are also obeying God – it is the right thing (normally) to do
- Children are also to obey their instructions at school, “*in loco parentis*” – schools stand in place of parents
- But parents stand in the place of God (in the eyes of children), and children have a great responsibility them

V2 – **What does “honor” include?** Respect and even taking care of them in old age (see *1 Tim. 5*)

V3 – **What is the promise of this commandment?**

- Two-fold:
 1. It may be well with us and that our days will be long on earth
 - Kids who don't obey parents and who don't follow instructions are more likely to get killed in traffic accidents, etc.
 2. That our society might exist a long time
 - In *Exodus 20.12* and *Deuteronomy 5.16*, Moses meant that the Israelite society would last a long time if children obeyed their parents
- Why would obedience to parents cause a society to last a long time?** A society would have more order and safety in it, and God will bless it

V 4 – Two responsibilities of fathers?

1. Provoke not children to anger – in other words, don't cause anguish for them

-How do we provoke children to anger?

-Not having consistent policies and rules

-Showing favoritism

-Not spending enough time with them

-Forgetting to encourage them

-Being too strict

-Children need an even-handed approach

2. Instruct them in the way of the Lord

-Does instruction in the Bible fall primarily on the father or on the mother? Father

Read Proverbs 1.8-9

-It is sad that so many fathers in our society have failed to be spiritual leaders in their families

Ephesians 6.5-9 – Slaves and masters

V 5 – Slavery was in force in many parts of the world at the time Paul was writing

-Why didn't Paul tell slaves to run away? Why not take up arms against slavery?

-Book of *Philemon*: The way to end slavery is in changing the hearts of people

-Violence is not the answer; it only is a temporary solution.

V 6 – What commandment did Paul give the slaves? Obey your masters with fear and trembling, as to Christ

-In other words, it is not a case of just trying to look busy

-What would be their motivation for them to work as slaves? As if they are serving Christ

V 7 – They are told to render good service to their master

V 8 – What promise came with Paul's commandment? God would repay them

V 9 – A sobering thought

-Message to slave-owners? Treat slaves right

-Explain "no partiality with God"? All will answer to God on the Day of Judgment

Ephesians 6.10-20 – The Armor of the Christian

V 10 – In what way should we be strong? In the Lord

-Our strength is to be "*in the Lord*"

-Special message – We are not to become obsessed with physical exercise, but with spiritual exercise

V 11 – What kind of armor are we to put on? God's armor

-Recall Paul's circumstance: a prisoner

- **Read Acts 28.16** – Paul was with a soldier at all times, so he had an opportunity to observe Roman armor up close
- What will God’s armor help us do?** Withstand the schemes of the devil
- “**Schemes**”? Not straightforward attacks from Satan, but rather tricks, etc.

V 12 – **What type of warfare is the Christian to be engaged in?** Spiritual, not fleshly and in human blood (see *2 Cor. 10.3-5*)

- What powerful spiritual enemies are described in *vs. 12!*
- Are our enemies the Russians or the Chinese or the Arabs?** No, it is Satan and his forces
- We are waging spiritual warfare and attacking Satan

V 13 – Notice – we are to “*stand firm*” – what every congregation needs: more who will stand firm in the faith

V 14 – Notice that this armor is described in the order that a person would put it on

- First, the defensive parts of the armor
- What goes around our mid-section?** Truth
- We get the heart of the matter
- The belt or girdle kept the Roman robe from flapping in the wind and getting in the way
- We don’t have to grope and guess when we have the truth
- Across the chest?** Breastplate of righteousness (like a bullet proof vest)
- People cannot spear us if we have on righteous clothing

V 15 – **What goes on our feet?** Preparation of the gospel of peace

- Roman soldier had cleats in his sandals so that he could stand firm and not lose footing

V 16 – Paul is describing a huge, oblong shield made out of wood

- One of most dangerous weapons in First Century was a spear or dart with the tip dipped in tar and ignited
- Only a large wooden shield would stop these darts and extinguish them
- What is our shield?** Our faith

V 17 – Helmet (maybe reference to our thoughts)

- What is our helmet?** Salvation = the knowledge that we are saved
- What is our only offensive weapon?** The Word of God
- The only weapon we can use against the world is the Bible, not physical weapons

V 18-19 – **In addition to wearing the armor of God, what else did Paul urge the Ephesians to do?** Pray

- What was to characterize their prayers?** Alertness and perseverance
- For what were they to pray?** All the saints and (*v 19*) and for the Apostle Paul
- For what did Paul want them to pray?** For more boldness in his preaching
- Did he want them to pray for his release?** No, and he didn’t ask for more comfortable cell
- Maybe we need to follow his example and pray that sick person may be better able to hold up under the sickness, instead of always praying that person may be healed

V 20 – **How did Paul describe himself?** Ambassador in chains
-He wanted more help in being a bold preacher for Christ

Ephesians 6.21-24 – Farewell comments

V 21 – **Who would be delivering the letter?** Tychicus, beloved brother and faithful minister
-He is mentioned in *Acts 20.4* with Paul on last part of his Third Missionary Journey
-*Colossians 4.7-9* – carried the letter to the church at Colossae
-2 *Timothy 4.12, Titus 3.12* – a good helper for Paul
-**What else would Tychicus do?** Answer their questions about Paul's condition

V 22 – Tychicus would comfort their hearts

V 23 – A final word of peace
-He mentions peace, faith, grace

V 24 – An incorruptible love

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