

Ephesians 6:1-9

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." <sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

<sup>5</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, <sup>6</sup> not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, <sup>7</sup> rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, <sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. <sup>9</sup> Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

**ESV**

IF PARENTS TRAIN UP A CHILD TO BE SELFISH and with no respect for grown people why shouldn't we have a society largely made up of people who only think of themselves? One of the most common forms of child abuse is for parents to refuse to give consistent discipline to their children.

In the last lesson, we saw the Scriptural model for the relationship between husband and wife. If people, even Christians, reject what the Bible instructs then they can only blame themselves for the disharmony that results. In this lesson we move to the parent-child and servant-master relationships.

## 1. OBEDIENCE in the FAMILY

### a) Obedient Children

6:1-3

First, a couple of interpretive matters:

"...in the Lord..." applies to the older child who has been taught the precepts of God. A small child can not evaluate the command, he is to obey it. That places the responsibility on the parent to know what to command the child so that the command is "in the Lord."

The statement about the "first commandment with promise," when compared to the Second of the Ten Commandments, may be understood two ways. The promise attached to the Second Commandment is a statement of the character of God and does not make a specific application. Or, the promise that accompanies the Fifth Commandment is of primary, or first importance.

**Ex 20:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup> but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

**Ex 20:12**

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

In order for children to obey, the parents must make some effort to discipline. The sinful nature is toward rebellion and this rebellion must be controlled at its first outbreak and consistently thereafter. A child does not have to understand much less agree with the commandments of a parent, he simply must obey.

It is stupid to "explain" to a three-year old why they must obey. The small child will only understand authority administered according to the Scripture. Modern, humanistic psychology aside, a spanking is the way to apply discipline to the small rebel.

A Scriptural spanking (beating) is not cruel.

**Proverbs13:24**

Whoever spares the rod hates his son,  
but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

**Proverbs 23:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> Do not withhold discipline from a child;  
if you strike him with a rod, he will not die.  
<sup>14</sup> If you strike him with the rod,  
you will save his soul from Sheol.

Properly applied, a spanking hurts just enough and quickly stops hurting. The child associates the pain with the rebellion and very few spankings will be necessary. The secret is to be consistent and swift. Don't yell at the child or threaten the child, just do it! The child will learn that you mean what you say every time you give the child a command. The child won't have to go through the game of seeing how mad you will get before you yell or lose your temper.

It is too simple. Just say, "Ichabod, pick up your toys, its time for bed." If Ichabod appears to be hard of hearing, you move silently towards Ichabod, switch in hand, and if he hasn't made his move to obey before you get to him, whack him on his bottom with the switch. No yelling, no apology, no explanation, just hit him on the bottom with the switch. It's a miracle! Before long when you say, "Ichabod, pick up your toys, its time for bed," he will obey and the switch will not be needed. This will not work if you are not more mature than the child. And you have to do it every time you give the child a command. Don't confuse the child about when you mean what you say.

Does this sound too harsh? Is your way working?

b) Considerate Parents

6:4

The reason you don't yell and nag a child is that you are not to enrage him. The Father is the head of the house, but the mother is one of the parents.

"Training up" a child involves many things. The example you set will be the most effective method you have. Whatever you do is okay from the perspective of the child. If you lie and lose your temper and insist on having your way without regard to others, that's what you are training the child to do.

## 2. OBEDIENCE in the WORKPLACE

### a) Obedient Servants 6:5-8

The text itself neither justifies slavery nor condemns it. It limits itself to instructing a Christian what to do, if he happens to be a slave. And he should act sincerely, in the simplicity of his heart. (Gordon Clark)

### b) Considerate Masters 6:9

Human distinctions mean nothing to God. If you are a "master," don't act like you deserve to be one. Some people are leaders and some people are followers.

Be good in the role in which you find yourself.

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It is interesting that God can say in twenty-two verses all that we need to understand about our relationships in the family and in the workplace. How many volumes of words have been written on these subjects without adding anything substantial?

## STRENGTH IN CHRIST

### Ephesians 6:10-24

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup> and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, <sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

<sup>21</sup> So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. <sup>22</sup> I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

<sup>23</sup> Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

OUR STUDIES IN EPHESIANS have taught us how believers were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. We have learned of the great blessings that come from being "in Christ." We were reminded that it was grace and not works that saved us. We were shown how the church is to be in harmony with no exceptions allowed. Then we were instructed about our relationships in the family and on the job. Then believers have it "made in the shade," right?

Wrong!

## 1. A CHRISTIAN'S CHALLENGE

6:10-11

The messenger of death found Ahab through the joints of his harness.  
The devil is such an archer: so Christian's need the "full armor."

## 2. A CHRISTIAN'S ENEMY

6:12

The real world is not as much rocks and trees and birds and seas as it is souls, minds and spirits. If we are going to win the real war we must know that our enemy is the devil. We can only be successful in this war if we put on God's armor!

## 3. A CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE

6:13

The "evil day" is any time you are under attack by the devil and his forces. We must withstand, fight off the attack and stand, and be ready for the next assault.

## 4. A CHRISTIAN'S ARMOR

6:14-17a

Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress brilliantly uses this passage. If you haven't read Pilgrim's Progress don't wait any longer. The Bible excepted, it is the best book you can read.

Get Brother Gables' series on Pilgrims' Progress.

I put it on my iPod and listened to it twice as I drove about in my car.

See Brother Gables or Sister Carolyn to get a copy on CDs.

The whole armor of God:

My copy of William Gurnall's The Christian in Complete Armour is 600 pages of small print.

Here we can only note the elements briefly:

- a) The Belt worn about the waist not only held his sword but protected his abdomen with truth.
- b) The breastplate is the righteousness of Christ. If you try to use your own righteousness as a cover the devil has you beaten already.
- c) The footwear is to carry you in readiness with the Gospel of peace. The Gospel, to be Christian, is objective righteousness and unchanging truth.
- d) The shield was a large device about four feet tall by thirty inches wide used to fend off flaming arrows. Do you ever have blasphemous thoughts or suggestions of cupidity [desire, greed], discontent and vanity? Then you need this shield.
- e) The helmet of salvation is received or taken.

## 5. A CHRISTIAN'S WEAPONS

All of the armor above was for defense as we face our enemy, the devil. There was no protection for the back if we retreat.

But we also have offensive weapons. A good defense will keep you from losing the war but it won't give you a decisive victory.

...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...

"Now it takes some practice to use a sword with maximum, or indeed with any, effect....A clumsy soldier is soon dead....we must practice with the word of God....In many situations, we know beforehand what the enemy is likely to do. The Romanists put tradition on a level with Scripture, or even above. The secular scientists use evolution and mechanical physics to refute our faith. The liberals deny the Virgin Birth, the Atonement...and even the Deity of Christ. For all this we can clearly prepare." Gordon Clark

...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...

We have the weapon of prayer at all times. Use it with truth!

## 6. CLOSING GREETINGS

6:21-24

<sup>21</sup> So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. <sup>22</sup> I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

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