

Ephesians 6:1-9

"Honoring Authority"

Paul has been developing the principle of godly harmony in the home... But at the base of that; that is, how we made our way *into* that was through the admonition (all the way back at the beginning of Ch 5) to walk in love & to walk in the light that God has given to us.

The Holy Spirit (through the apostle Paul) has been instructing in how to lead a life pleasing to God. After all that God has done *for us*, after everything He's supplied & given *to us*, this is the appropriate way to respond to Him. It's not something we do to try & gain God's favor, it's because He's *given us* His favor in Christ. We might even go so far as to say that if Ch's 1-3 are a look at all that Christ has done *for us*, that Ch's 4-6 speak to what the life of Christ looks like *in us*.

& When we come to Vs 15 of Ch 5 Paul begins to exhort us to walk (navigate life) circumspectly, not ignorantly, but vigilantly, redeeming the time because the days are evil... In Vs 18 he begins to unravel the secret of leading a "successful" Christian life, & it's found in being consistently/persistently filled w/the Spirit of God... We cannot lead a life of holiness, a life of fruitfulness (in the things that pertain to the kingdom of God) in our own efforts, it can't be done. We need the Spirit of God dwelling *in us*, *filling us*, coming upon & overflowing us.

& What a life filled w/God's Spirit looks like isn't tongues, miracles or eccentric "Christian" activity. But rather it's marked by praise to God (both publicly [in the assembly] & privately in my own heart), it's a life that recognizes God's grace & gives Him thanks in the name of our Lord J.C. & that is earmarked by humility, honoring & submitting to one another in the fear of God.

From there Paul launched into the home. If we're to honor & submit to one another generally (maintaining a "team" kind of mentality) than how much more does it apply in our home & family?

Yet today more than ever, rather than striving to maintain unity, we have a society that's fractured by division & contention. Families are splintered by divorce, children rebelling against their parents, employers trying to figure out how to keep employees working productively & everyone is looking for a solution. *We've tried education, we've tried legislation, but the word of God says that the answer is found in regeneration. It's not reformation that's needed, it's transformation (a new heart), we're to be filled w/the Spirit of God & submitted to the Lordship of J.C.*

Submitting to Jesus will lead us to submit to one another & be about our respective roles that we might bring honor & glory to Him. So far, Paul has addressed what that looks like in the wife's life, in the husband's life (& if you weren't here for those I'd advise you to download them later [they're free] they will speak into your marriage I assure you) & now he addresses the children (& then what we'll apply to employer, employee, how it is we're to honor authority).

Vs 1-3

Children, obey your parents: It's a simple command, plainly put. & The truth is, this word for "children" doesn't indicate only infancy to 17-18 yrs old, it speaks to any age so long as you're under their roof. The idea is, that if you're living w/your parents, you're to be obedient to their direction for your life. You may not like their rules, or agree w/their rules, but you're to abide *by* their rules so long as you're under their care. Even Jesus subjected Himself to His earthly parents. We know they weren't better than Him, smarter than Him or always made the best decisions for Him, but it's God's ordained order so He honored God & obeyed them...

It's when they'd gone from Jerusalem & were headed back to Nazareth (how many of you parents have ever gotten in the car, headed home & realized that one of your kids were still at church [or wherever]?) You're not alone, Joseph & Mary did the same thing, they left Jesus in Jerusalem when He was 12 & they went back & found Him (but it wasn't an hour or 2 later, it took them 3 days!) **There He was sitting in the Temple, listening to the teachers & asking questions... & They were like, "Boy, what are you doing! We've been worried sick about You!" & Of course that's when He said, "Why are you looking for Me? Don't you know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they were like, "You're coming w/us!" & We read, "Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them,"**¹ He obeyed His parents...

But listen parents, if your children have a responsibility to *obey you*, that means you have a responsibility to *teach them*. They can't obey what they're not being taught. It's one of the most important obligations that God has entrusted to you.

Now there's *never* a need to teach your child how to *disobey*, have you discovered that? You didn't need to teach them how to lie, or be selfish, or *not do* what you instructed them. (We touched on this last week during our Easter service).

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Lk 2:51]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We inherited a natural inclination toward sin from Adam. I ran across a quote from the Minnesota Crime Commission that was published in 1926 (not a Christian organization by any stretch). It reads, *“Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it: his bottle, his mother’s attention, his playmate’s toys, his uncle’s watch, or whatever. Deny him these and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He’s dirty, he has no morals, no knowledge, no developed skills. This means that all children, not just certain children but all children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in their self-centered world of infancy, given free reign to their impulsive actions to satisfy each want, every child would grow up a criminal...”*

Or as the psalmist said it, *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.”*² He’s saying (as I often say) that we come flawed from the factory, that sin is present from the moment of conception. Therefore we have to be *taught* obedience. The bible teaches that disobedience to parents (in epidemic proportions) is actually a sign of living in the last days...

2 Timothy 3 says, *“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving...”*³ & It goes on from there. How often do we hear of cases where children are rejecting parental authority, when the word of God says that we’re to honor parental authority (it’s indicative of the times in which we live).

But parents, God has given to you the responsibility to *train up* your child. To teach them the ways & the word of God. Listen, we’re honored to have your children here for an hour or 2 each week, but don’t allow us to be the primary means of training your children in righteousness. *You’re* to do that, we simply underscore & supplement your work in their lives, *training them up*. God had told the children of Israel, *“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”*⁴ Or another way to understand that, we’re to speak to them of the ways word of God along life’s way. Any teachable moment you have, seize it. Talk to your kids, train them up in the things of the Lord.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 51:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (2 Ti 3:1-3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Dt 6:6-7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& Children, obey. It means to listen attentively & respond appropriately. This is your service unto the Lord. “Obey your parents *in the Lord*” or as unto the Lord (for the sake of the Lord). “For this is right” it’s how God designed the family to function. Parental authority is ordained & instituted by God. It’s “right”, & we’re to *honor* that.

Training involves order, it involves godly discipline. We’re to teach them right from wrong, the consequences of disobedience... There’s a big picture at work here. You want them to form a pattern of obedience & learn to honor authority because ultimately that will serve them in their relationship w/God. They’ll learn to submit to God’s authority, receive His discipline & obey *His* word (even if they don’t understand or don’t want to).

Today too many parents obey their children, doing whatever they say or demand simply to try & keep them happy & maintain peace in the home. But that’s failing in the role that God has entrusted to us to raise them in a godly manner that respects & responds appropriately to authority, aiming ultimately to God’s authority in our lives. A lot of kids demand their rights, but deny their responsibilities. But kids a responsibility before God to obey their parents.

“Honor your father & mother, which is the 1st commandment w/a promise; that it may be well w/you & you may live long on the earth.” Obedience has to do w/action, honor has to do w/the attitude (which is really more important than the action, the bible focuses way more on the *why* we do, than the *what* we do).

Now this never changes. We may no longer be obligated to *obey* our parents as we grow, get married & take on families of our own (for this reason a man shall leave his father & mother, Vs 31 of Ch 5), but we’re never released from *honoring* our parents.

& We recognize that the promise of living long on the earth isn’t a promise of immunity from tragedy. Things happen as part of living in a fallen world. The idea is that as a general rule if you honor your parents, you’re going to be staying out of trouble, avoiding a great deal of sin & you won’t be doing things that will place you in harm’s way.

But it’s not just the quantity of time, it’s also the quality of our lives. Sin will rob you, obedience will enrich your life. As you honor God, God will honor you.

Vs 4

It’s interesting to me that God invokes the fathers to be the primary disciplinary (not that the mother can’t discipline her children) in the light of the moral decay of our culture w/the increase of children w/out fathers in the home.

For instance; 90% of all homeless & runaway youths have no father in the home. 85% of children that exhibit behavioral disorders. 63% of youth suicides are of children w/no father in their life. 71% of all high school dropouts, 70% of juveniles in state operated institutions, 75% of adolescent patients in substance abuse centers. 75-80% of rapists motivated by displaced anger were w/out a father growing up. 85% of youths who wind up in prison grew up w/out a father. Right now our country is reeling from the pandemic of mass shooters, the common bond they all share? No father in the home growing up... Something else you might find interesting, when a mother comes to Christ, her family will join her at church only 17% of the time; but when a father comes to Christ, his family joins him 93% of the time.

God has given the responsibility of training the children (primarily) to the father. Meaning he is to instruct them, impart wisdom to them, godly morals, he's to both discipline & disciple them, train them & teach them. He's *not* to provoke them to wrath, meaning don't punish your child in a fit of rage or unhealthy disposition, we're not to vent on our kids. We're not to be overly critical toward them & torment them, we're to train them.

Notice it's the training & admonition "of the Lord." In other words, our discipline & discipling is done in the name of Jesus. If the child is in trouble, make sure they clearly understand what they did, why they're in trouble (maybe see if they can repeat it back to you)... Don't just bring the board of education to the seat of learning w/out an understanding of the situation.

As parents it's just as important, not only *what* we're doing, but *why* & the *way* we're doing it. We shouldn't humiliate our kids, or belittle them or show favoritism, these kinds of things provoke them to wrath, they build up a deep-seated anger & resentment over these kinds of things. One commentator pointed out that when it comes to discipline we need to make sure that we have control of ourselves before we seek to get control of our children. He said, "What right have you to say to your child that he needs discipline when you obviously need it yourself?" (Lloyd-Jones)

But don't be afraid to discipline your children in a godly way. If you don't society will in a secular way. There's a Chinese proverb that says, "Parents who are afraid to put their foot down usually have children who step on their toes."

James Dobson once said – “The parent must convince himself that discipline is not something he does *to* the child; it is something he does *for* the child.” Bring them up in the training & admonition of the Lord. Now if you’re a single mom, God’s grace is sufficient for you, I’m not trying *discourage* you, I’m trying to *encourage* dad’s to be the man God has called them to be.

Vs 5-8

I just want to get this out here so we can move on. Slavery was simply a fact of the Roman Empire (& many empires throughout world history). As much as 25-30% of the Roman Empire was made up of slaves. They might be doctors, agricultural farm hands, household servants, whatever. They could be professionals, educated, or put to labor.

Having said that they were also viewed as less than human & because of that it was common that they were brutally treated. So what Paul was writing here was revolutionary, “Don’t rebel against your masters, don’t be angry *toward* your masters, obey them & do what they say w/sincerity of heart, as to Christ.”

People wonder why the NT doesn’t speak out against slavery. Ultimately it’s because of the same reason I was speaking of when we began our time together. You can’t legislate righteousness. It’s not greater education that’s needed or some form of reformation, it’s regeneration. So Paul appealed to the human heart, the gospel changes people from the inside out & consequently it *was* Christianity that was responsible for the *undermining* (not overthrowing) of slavery in the Roman Empire.

But we can segue into the arena of Employee/employer for the sake of application. We’re talking here about people in authority over us (regardless of how harsh) & how we’re to honor *them* (in honoring Christ).

It’s 3 words in Vs 5 that changes everything. “As to Christ.” In other words when you work for your employer you should see your service as to Christ Himself! You might not like what he’s asked you to do (& we’re not speaking of something illegal or sinful, that’s altogether different, be it to parents, employers or anyone else our submission must stop at being compelled to sin) but if Jesus asked you to do it, it’d be done gladly & heartily!

I might not like it if my boss said, “Jeff, I need you to clean the toilets, take out the trash & then clean the parking lot.” I’d think, “You jerk! There’s other things I’d rather do!” But if *Jesus* said, “Jeff, could I count on you to clean the toilets, take out the trash & clean the parking lot?” Man, you drink from the toilet when I was done 😊!

I'd be honored to serve the Lord in *any* capacity! Yet this is exactly what the word of God is teaching us. You're working for Christ! Even if your boss seems like antichrist, God is allowing him to develop godly character in your life.

So we're to work w/the same attitude we would if Jesus were the one requiring the work of us. Would you have the same attitude, or talk about your boss w/negative connotation if he were Jesus? We're to take that same mentality to work. (& It's not a psychological self-deception to give us positive motivation, we're genuinely serving Christ, doing what we do as unto the Lord, regardless of what it is.) In Colossians we read it like this, *"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ."*⁵

God places eternal, heavenly value on your temporary earthly responsibilities when you do it w/the attitude of glorifying God. "W/fear & trembling" we're to respect authority, & they don't need to earn your respect, they deserve your respect because God is in control & if He wanted someone else over you, He'd put someone else over you.

In sincerity of heart; we're to apply ourselves. It's not to be eye service (meaning we'll only work while the boss is watching), or as men pleasers (just doing what we can to please the person who can promote me), but as servants of Christ, doing (notice) the will of God from the heart... W/goodwill, (good attitude, not griping) as to the Lord (3xs he mentions this). "Goodwill" transforms our work from duty to devotion, it's service for the Lord, not for man.

"Knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is slave or free." The Holy Spirit is letting you know that when you do good at your job as unto J.C. your reward is sure. God sees you & will reward you accordingly & it doesn't matter if you're the C.E.O. or the lowest man on the totem pole.

It's along the lines of the principle Jesus laid out when He said, *"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."*⁶ & God doesn't pay you weekly, bi-weekly or whatever. He's storing it all up for when you see Him & you'll enjoy it forever when you hear, "Well done, good & faithful servant. Enter in to the joy of your Lord."

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Col 3:23-24]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Lk 6:38]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 9

“Do the same things for them” (that is, the will of God from the heart) don’t squeeze out as much labor for as little reward as you can offer. Be fair w/your employees, God’s given you a position of authority, honor the Lord w/it. Don’t abuse your position of power or authority because you have a Master in heaven & he doesn’t care who you are. There is no partiality w/Him. He won’t go easy on you just because you were rich... To whom much is given, much more will be required.

So, we’re to honor authority & as parents or employers we’re to exercise godly authority. & Be we under authority, or be we the authority, we can only do what we’ve been called to do appropriately if we’re filled w/the Spirit of God. So let’s pray & ask God to fill us fresh even now...

Prayer Points:

God we need the filling of Your Holy Spirit, if we’re parents, or under the authority of parents, whatever our work situation may be. We just need You to empower us to be whom You’ve called us to be. & We thank You that if You call us You will equip us, so have Your way & be glorified in our lives.

God wants to be glorified in your life. But 1st He just wants your life. If you’ve not given your life to Christ, you’ve got nothing to lose & everything to gain. God has loved you w/an everlasting love. Jesus has shed His blood for you sin; He died that you might live, laid down His life to give you life. Turn from your sin, trust in Him today.