

Eph. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

This chapter continues right on regarding application of God's established authority to each person in the family. He now addresses the children. They are to understand that obedience to their parents is "right," in accordance with God's will. To obey or do as parents instruct you shows that you recognize their authority. My daughter instructs her children with a phrase I like—Obey right away without delay. And frankly, as God's children, that is exactly the response we should have to His instructions to us.

Eph. 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

Eph. 6:3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Verse two is referencing the fact that this was the first of the Ten Commandments that promises a special blessing for obedience.

Ex. 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

As given to the Israelites, it was directly connected to their continued possession of the Promised Land. Through the Holy Spirit, Paul is declaring the promise to be directly connected to the Christian's well being and length of life.

Even as we grow older, to show honor to your parents gives evidence to how valuable and important they are to you. When we honor our parents, we realize that the guidance and direction they give us is a result of their own experience and learning and is well worth consideration. We honor our parents when we show our gratitude for their love and care for us by loving and caring for them in their time of need.

The promise that accompanies this command seems cut and dried, but the reality in some people's lives seems to deny its truth. It's another one of those areas in which we have to accept that our thinking and understanding comes far short of God's. This promise may include application to more than this current lifetime. What we determine as *well* or good can be very different than how God views events in our lives. It's another one of those areas in which faith in our Father in heaven is key to how we respond to the "bad" things that happen in our life or when those we love die "before their time." I was actually having a conversation with my grandchildren (ages 7, 5 & 4) yesterday regarding their concern about their mother who was out driving in a thunderstorm. I reminded them that as God's children, we didn't have to worry about things like that because He is always working what is good in our lives—even when things look bad to us. I asked them, "What is the worst thing that can happen to us? We can die." The seven year old piped right up and said, "That's not the worst thing, because we get to go to heaven with Jesus." Every child of God should have the heart of that seven year old.

Eph. 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Again, the address is to the father as the chief authority in the family and accountable before God as to the training and direction given the children. The Greek for the word *nurture* made reference to instruction including disciplinary

correction; the Greek for *admonition* made reference to the use of mild rebuke and warning. Seeing these meanings gave context for not provoking children to wrath, which would seem to contrast positive instruction and would include giving instruction without proper correction and warning. Proper correction and warning can only be provided from an established foundation of understanding as to the expectations of the instructor. Christian fathers should always establish that foundation according to God's word. Christian fathers should follow the Father's example of giving clear instructions and establishing acceptable behavioral boundaries with clear, appropriate consequences for disobedience and consistent, loving enforcement.

Eph. 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

Eph. 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Eph. 6:7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

Eph. 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

Paul now turns his attention to *servants*. The Greek for this word makes reference to slaves, whether voluntary or involuntary. Paul is reminding us that everything we do should be with a heart toward honoring and serving the Lord. I think it is important to note that God's word instructs us about living according to His will in this world. In Paul's letters to the Galatians and Colossians, the Spirit tells us that there is no respect of persons before God; we are all on equal footing before the Lord. The fact that we claim His name and represent Him before others requires that we act through the supernatural empowerment of the Spirit and reject worldly attitudes. The Christian servant is to serve with the understanding that he is serving God by serving His master. His/her goal isn't to please his master; it is to please God. With that purpose in mind, there should be no difference in the quality and dependability of your service whether your master is present or not; it should also ensure that one's service is the best that he can do. When the motive for our actions is to serve God, we can be assured that those actions will be rewarded by God.

This principle is also applicable to employees toward their bosses, and the principle from the following verse is applicable to bosses toward their employees.

Eph. 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Paul next turns his attention to Christian masters. Just as Christian servants are to serve as unto the Lord, Christian masters are to rule their servants with a mindset of honoring God as His servant in the process. Threatening a servant means you are ruling him through inspiring fear. God rules His kingdom in love, grace and mercy. This doesn't mean that there are no consequences for disobedience or poor service. It does mean, however, that expectations are clear and reasonable and that correction or punishment is administered with consistency and with the intent to change behavior—not browbeat.

I can't help but note that these masters are not instructed to free their servants; although they are reminded that in God's eyes these servants are on equal footing with their masters. Every response they have to a servant should reflect God's heart toward His servants.

Eph. 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

After addressing the importance of submission to authority as established by God, Paul moves right on to a discussion of spiritual warfare. I hadn't really thought about it before, but this is a natural progression in the flow of thought. Some of our worst spiritual struggles as Christians occur in the areas of humility and submission to authority.

Paul often positions himself as just one of the brethren. Though he is an apostle by the will of God and positioned as a leader in the early church, he recognizes that he is but another sinner saved by grace. He struggles with sin and temptation just as others in the body of Christ do. At this point he becomes an encourager even though his message is one of spiritual warfare. Never in scripture did God tell us that submission to Him and living the Christian life would be easy. He did, however, promise to be with us and empower us to be overcomers.

Rom. 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

1Th. 3:4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

1Pet. 4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Matt. 28:20 ... lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world.

1Cor. 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

1John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

When Paul tells the believers to "be strong in the Lord," he knows that he is not asking the impossible. The key truth for the child of God is that his/her power is from the Lord in the person of the Holy Spirit. If we will but yield to His authority and will, there is no fear, temptation or enemy we can't conquer.

Eph. 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Just as the battle in which we are engaged is spiritual, so is the armor needed to engage in the battle with confidence and protection. Each piece of this armor is an attribute or gift of God that He is ready and willing to impart to His children. The fact that we are told to put on armor implies that we are facing an enemy. Paul doesn't leave us guessing as to the enemy; it is the devil—the false accuser, the slanderer (from the Greek). The devil is no ordinary opponent. He doesn't usually choose to attack you head on; he's too smart for that. He uses "wiles," which Webster defines as trickery, deception and allurements. The Greek adds the idea that he is lying in wait looking for the opportune time to attack. He's looking for the time when your defenses are down. By appropriating the armor of God we frustrate his attempt to identify a time when we are vulnerable.

Eph. 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Paul again emphasizes that the Christian's struggle is a spiritual one; his enemies can't be seen. They are defined as not consisting of flesh and blood; they are identified as:

- Principalities – The Greek implies that these are the leaders among the evil spiritual forces.
- Powers – The Greek indicates that these are evil spiritual forces that have been delegated certain areas of power and authority.
- Rulers of the darkness of this world – I got the idea that these evil beings are the spiritual influences behind evil people on planet earth.
- Spiritual wickedness in high places – Maybe this has to do with the limited abilities Satan and his forces have to use the weather and other deceptive signs associated with the skies and heavens as they seek to turn men from God.

Whether or not I have the specifics right regarding the different ranks or positions, I am confident that the reference is to the demonic forces that are led by Satan and that are continually working to disrupt the will of God on planet earth and establish cause for accusation against the child of God. Consider the following:

- When God sent a messenger to Daniel as recorded in Daniel 10, he was hindered for 21 days until Michael, the archangel, came to help him so that he could continue on to Daniel. The force that hindered him was identified as the "prince of the kingdom of Persia."
- The book of Job begins with God allowing Satan to persecute Job to prove Job's integrity and faith. In trying to get Job to curse God he utilizes wicked men, the forces of nature, and even disease.
- John very clearly records that Satan is obsessed with "accusing the brethren."

Rev. 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Eph. 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Paul is basically saying—“In consideration of the powerful evil forces that will attack you, put on the whole suit of armor provided by God to protect you from these attacks. If you do, you will not only survive the attack, you will emerge the victor of each battle.”

Eph. 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

Eph. 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Eph. 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Eph. 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

In these four verses Paul itemizes the armor provided by God to each believer.

- The belt of truth
- The breastplate of righteousness
- Shoes of peace that identify you as prepared to share the gospel
- The shield of faith
- The helmet of salvation
- The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God

It's interesting to me that truth and righteousness are the first pieces of armor mentioned since Jesus described the enemy as the “Father of lies.”

John 8:44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for **he is a liar, and the father of it.**

The Holy Spirit through Paul also identified the works of Satan as unrighteous.

2Th. 2:9 *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

2Th. 2:10 And **with all deceivableness of unrighteousness** in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

If we determine to cling to the truth of God's word and act in righteousness and obedience, Satan will not be able to seduce or deceive us.

Wearing shoes of peace identify us as part of God's army. Scripture is clear in declaring that there is no peace for the wicked (Isaiah 48:22). Those who wear shoes of peace are intent on sharing the gospel with others and promoting peace among men; Satan and his forces, on the other hand, are ever out to undermine God's word and cause trouble.

Utilizing the shield of faith means that we are keeping our focus on the character of God and refusing to regard any declaration that presents Him or His truth in any light that does not align with His Word. This was the critical piece of armor that would have delivered Eve from Satan's deception in the garden. Satan's darts come in many different forms, but they are all tipped with the same few poisons—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. It's interesting to note that Paul prefaced this piece of armor as the most important (“above all”) even though he listed it fourth (probably because he is using the

picture of a soldier getting ready for battle). Without faith we do not have access to the other pieces of armor.

The helmet of salvation again identifies us as part of God's army and signifies one is empowered by the Holy Spirit. We can't expect to defeat supernatural forces of evil without access to supernatural power of our own, and the child of God is empowered through the Holy Spirit from the moment he places his faith in Christ.

The sword of the Spirit, God's holy word, is the only piece of armor that is used for offense as well as defense. The more familiar we are with God's word and the more we hide it in our heart, the more that is in our arsenal for the Holy Spirit to supply as needed. I also believe this includes personal inspiration of the Spirit as needed in situations such as referenced by the Lord's teaching in Mark 13.

Mark 13:9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.
Mark 13:11 But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

It is also interesting to note that the Lord expects us to face our enemy prepared and confident; we are not to be afraid. Paul emphasized this truth in his letter to Timothy.

2Tim. 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

(10/09) As I was listening to the late Adrian Rogers this morning, he emphasized this section a bit differently. It crossed my mind that he was basically saying, "Clothe yourself in Jesus." A little later he voiced that very thought. Though not exactly how he presented it, this is how I processed it.

Truth – (John 14:6) "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Righteousness – (1 Corinthians 1:30) "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:"

Peace – (2 Thessalonians 3:16) "Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means."

Faith - (1 Timothy 1:14) "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

Salvation – (Luke 19:10) "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Word of God – (John 1:1 & 14) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

Paul actually voice this same thought in his letter to the Romans.

Romans 13:14 “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

Eph. 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Eph. 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

You can't read the writings of Paul without identifying him as a man who has great faith in the power of prayer. He is encouraging the Ephesian believers to pray in the power of the Spirit. I think it is interesting to note that the Greek for “praying” and “prayer” include the idea of worship. It seems to me that Paul is emphasizing just that point—Prayer is a time of worship as well as supplication. I know I grew up thinking that prayer was a time of talking to God and asking Him to do things for me and for those for which I prayed. Prayer is much more than a time of making requests to God; it's a time of fellowship with the Father, a time to express your love and praise for Him. When we pray in the Spirit, He leads us to just such expression. Jesus taught this truth to His disciples.

John 16:13-15 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but **whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.** All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

Paul goes on to emphasize that it is important for us to be watchful and alert to the needs of the saints (other believers) and to pray for them accordingly with perseverance and diligence. James too emphasized the power of prayer in the life of a believer.

James 5:16 Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Neither does Paul hesitate to ask for prayer for himself. He was human and he didn't want to be impeded in his mission to spread the gospel by human fears; he was requesting prayer for inspiration and boldness as he continued to present the “mystery of the gospel,” that it was for Gentile and Jew alike.

Eph. 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

From this verse we know that Paul was writing this letter from prison and that he was in prison because of his ministry. Paul wants to be bold in his testimony while in prison and he wants to present his message in the right way with the right words. He wants his message to change lives; he wants to present his message in love.

Eph. 6:21 But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

Eph. 6:22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts.

As he closes, Paul knows that his friends will want to know more about how he is doing, and he assures them that Tychicus, the one bringing them the letter, will give them a thorough update. Tychicus is identified as a “beloved brother” and “faithful minister in the Lord.” Paul considered him a dear friend and a dependable and faithful servant who was serving the Lord and through his service to the Lord was serving Paul and others. In other words, he lived by the principle that Paul had been writing about. Paul was sending Tychicus as a faithful messenger of the truth who would deliver that message as one of encouragement.

Eph. 6:23 Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph. 6:24 Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Paul closes this letter just as he begins it—wishing the believers in Ephesus grace and peace. Peace is only available to those who look to God in faith. I really liked the translation from the CJB for verse 23.

Shalom to the brothers. May God the Father and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah give you love and trust.

It emphasizes the unity of Father and Son and that they are the source that empowers us to grow in love and strengthen our faith.

The wording of verse 24 was also intriguing. Paul wished grace for those who love the Lord Jesus “in sincerity.” Most of the translations make reference to undying or incorruptible love. When I looked at the Greek, it also made reference to genuineness. Obviously, genuine love is undying and incorruptible; but it also implied that there could be those in the church whose professed love of Jesus was not genuine. Sad to say, I think that is a true statement about the “church” not just of Paul’s day, but of today as well.

To the Ephesians written from Rome, by Tychicus.