

EPHESIANS

CHAPTER SIX

1. How should children obey their parents?

*“Children, obey your parents **in the Lord**”* (Ephesians 6:1). Insofar as obedience to parents does not contradict obedience to God (Luke 14:26), it is required. That is the only condition when it comes to submitting to those whom the Lord commands us to submit to (Acts 4:19; 5:29).

2. Why should children obey their parents?

*“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, **for this is right**”* (Ephesians 6:1). This is not some trivial issue, but a matter of right and wrong, for disobedience has severe consequences (Romans 1:28-32; 2nd Timothy 3:1-9).

3. Among the Ten Commandments, what is unique about *“Honor your father and mother?”*

*“Honor your father and mother, **which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.**”* (Ephesians 6:2-3). Not only is it the first, but it is the only commandment among the Ten with an attendant promise, and that promise is length of days (Exodus 20:12). While all commandment keeping holds the promise of longevity (Deuteronomy 4:40), this one is singled out in the decalogue and it makes sense. First, children who obey basic instructions from their parents while they are juveniles – look both ways when crossing the street, don’t climb too high, don’t talk to strangers, say no to drugs – will, typically, outlive their peers who disregard parental guidance. Second, those who

appreciate those older than themselves are more likely to do those things which allow them to get older, themselves.

Jesus makes it abundantly clear that honoring father and mother is not limited to childhood, but has a very real application in adulthood (Matthew 15:1-9).

4. What must fathers refrain from?

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath” (Ephesians 6:4). Parents, and especially dads, must take care not to anger their children unnecessarily. While discipline is serious and essential, it should not be motivated by a parent’s anger, but by love. Children need to perceive love in their father’s actions. The chief concern is avoiding discouragement (Colossians 3:21).

5. How should fathers raise their children?

“Bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

The word here translated as *“training”* means *“chastening”* or *“chastisement”* and is so translated in another passage (Hebrews 12:5-11), where it is definitively unpleasant.

The prior instruction about avoiding provocation is offered in conjunction with this order to correct behavior in a way that is inevitably painful.

“Admonition” also carries a negative connotation as its other New Testament uses indicate (1st Corinthians 10:11; Titus 3:10). So, a careful balance must be maintained, considering that the father is the primary disciplinarian who must also not discourage his children or provoke them to anger.

6. How must bondservants behave toward their masters?

“Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ” (Ephesians 6:5). Like every other role of subjection, the bondservant is really submitting to the authority and power of Jesus Christ and the master in the flesh is merely a conduit for that submission.

God was not favorable toward the institution of slavery. Inspiration condemns as *“lawless,” “insubordinate,” “ungodly,” “sinners,”* and *“profane”* (1st Timothy 1:9) those who are *“kidnappers”* (1st Timothy 1:10 NKJV, NASB) or *“menstealers”* (KJV, ASV) or *“enslavers”* (ESV) or *“slave traders”* (NIV). Withholding wages at all is condemnable (James 5:4). Those who are enslaved are encouraged to gain their freedom if possible, but not to be concerned if they cannot (1st Corinthians 7:20-24). Nonetheless, the focus of the gospel is not, directly, the improvement of the human condition, but of bringing souls to Christ. Accordingly, Scripture addresses people in the situations they are in, even if those situations are undesirable (1st Peter 2:18-24).

7. Why should bondservants obey?

“Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Ephesians 6:6-7). It should be done because it honors the Lord (1st Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:9-10). This applies to all employment situations, not just enslavement.

8. What is the benefit of humble obedience?

“Knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free” (Ephesians 6:8). God’s recompense is worth the trouble (2nd Corinthians 5:10; 9:6).

9. How should masters treat their bondservants?

“And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening” (Ephesians 6:9). If slaves serving masters is to be done as if to Christ, then those who are masters ought to lead them as Christ would – with love and concern (Colossians 4:1; Philemon 15-16), not intimidation.

10. Why should masters practice goodwill toward those under their command?

“Knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him” (Ephesians 6:9). Even those who are masters of men, themselves, must serve the true Master in heaven, so they ought to treat their servants as they want to be treated by the Lord (Matthew 7:12).

11. Where should brethren derive their strength from?

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). We cannot rely on our own strength, but God’s strength will never fail us (Psalm 18:1-3; Philippians 4:13).

12. How can anyone stand against the devil?

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11) and *“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”* (Ephesians 6:13). Nothing less than the *“whole armor”* will do. One or two items will not suffice. Otherwise, we won’t be standing, as commanded, but retreating.

13. Identify the enemy.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). The adversary is the devil (1st Peter 5:8), which makes the opposition spiritual and intellectual rather than physical (1st Timothy 6:12; 2nd Timothy 2:3-4).

14. What purpose does truth serve in the armor of God?

“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth” (Ephesians 6:14). A belt/girdle serves the purpose of holding everything together. It holds the pants up and it is what one’s gear attaches to (1st Samule 25:13). For God’s soldier, truth is what holds everything together; it is that upon which every other element depends. We serve a leader who cannot lie (Titus 1:2), while fighting an enemy who is the originator of all lies (John 8:44); therefore, we need truth to tie down every other piece in our armor.

15. What does righteousness do for the soldier of Christ?

“Having put on the breastplate of righteousness” (Ephesians 6:14). Righteousness, depicted here as the breastplate, is what protects the heart. Contrary to the worldly idea that one should “follow your heart,” inspiration warns against such a dangerous notion (Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 28:26), teaching instead that we ought to “keep” and “guide” the heart (Proverbs 4:23; 23:19). The primary text informs us “righteousness” will get the job done. To acquire righteousness, we need Christ (2nd Corinthians 5:21), His gospel (Romans 1:16-17), Scripture (2nd Timothy 3:16), and then put it into practice (1st John 3:7).

Note that there is no backplate, only a breastplate, because we won’t be retreating.

16. Why is the preparation of the gospel depicted as footwear?

“And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15). Boots are made for walking and the soldiers of Christ have our marching orders; we are told to “go” in order to bring lost souls to salvation (Mark 16:15-16). This the reason that preachers’ feet get metaphorical attention in God’s word (Romans 10:14-15).

17. How does faith function for God’s warrior?

“Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one” (Ephesians 6:16). Faith is the shield by which attacks are deflected (Hebrews 11:32-34). It is only through faith that we can be afforded victory (1st John 5:4-5).

18. How does salvation function in the armor of God?

“And take the helmet of salvation” (Ephesians 6:17). A helmet guards the head, thus the warrior of God guards his mind with salvation. Satan’s tactics include corrupting the mind (2nd Corinthians 11:3; 4:1-6), but we can be armed with Christ’s mind (1st Peter 4:1-2; 2nd Corinthians 10:3-6).

19. What is the only weapon of offense issued to Christ’s combatants?

“And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). This is the only offensive weapon in the Christian’s arsenal as all else is defensive in nature, but it’s such a powerful weapon that it is all we need (Hebrews 4:12), as it cuts to the heart (Acts 2:37; 7:54).

The whole armor does not include a scabbard. Once a soldier of Christ draws the sword of the Spirit, he must never sheathe it!

20. Does prayer fit into the armor of God?

Remarks about prayer seem to be presented while segueing topics. It's possible Paul meant these words to fit into the specific theme of arming soldiers of Christ, but that's not a required conclusion. They would certainly fit, though, because communication with headquarters is a major concern of all on the battlefield. The warriors of God should intently desire the personal attention of the commander.

21. When is it best to pray?

"Praying always" (Ephesians 6:18). There is constant need for praying (Luke 18:1; Romans 12:12; 1st Thessalonians 5:17). This does not mean that a Christian is engaged in unending prayer 24/7, for then he could accomplish nothing else; one can, correctly, be *"finished praying"* (1st Kings 8:54). It does mean that a Christian is not limited to set times of day in order to pray. We can pray freely at any time and should do so often!

22. How should prayer be done?

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance" (Ephesians 6:18).

"Praying always with all prayer" sounds needlessly redundant at first glance, but Paul is teaching that every kind of prayer needs to be engaged in – intercession, supplication, thanksgiving, all of it (Philippians 4:6; 1st Timothy 2:1).

“Supplication” refers to petition, entreaty, begging, or beseeching. It is an earnest and humble request based on need.

“Praying... in the Spirit” most likely speaks of our reliance on the Holy Spirit in prayer (Jude 20) to intercede with the words we don’t know to say (Romans 8:26).

Watchfulness with perseverance is needed in prayer to be spared from temptation (Matthew 26:41) and because the end is coming (1st Peter 4:7).

23. Who needs our supplication?

“And supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18). Jesus prayed for all the saints (John 17:20-21) and Paul prayed for the saints in Rome (Romans 1:8-9), in Ephesus (Ephesians 1:15-16), in Philippi (Philippians 1:3-4), in Colosse (Colossians 1:3-4), and in Thessalonica (1st Thessalonians 1:2), and the Jerusalem saints prayed for the saints in Corinth (2nd Corinthians 9:14). If we are to pray for all men (1st Timothy 2:1), then all Christians everywhere should be at the top of that list.

24. What supplication did Paul request for himself?

“And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:19-20).

Paul was never shy about requesting prayers (Romans 15:30; 2nd Corinthians 1:11; Philippians 1:19; Colossians 4:3; 1st Thessalonians 5:25; 2nd Thessalonians 3:1; Philemon 22), nor were other preachers (Hebrews 13:18). Although it is nice to hear brethren thank God for the work the preacher does, what we need most is supplications for the progress of that work.

In particular, Paul requested prayers for **boldness** to speak! This is what all preachers need (Acts 4:13, 29, 31). That he was writing from prison would imply he already had plenty of boldness, but he still pleaded for more.

25. Who was Tychicus and what was his role?

“But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts” (Ephesians 6:21-22). Tychicus was from Asia (Acts 20:4), where Ephesus was located, and was at least previously acquainted with the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17). He would almost certainly have been the messenger by whom this epistle was delivered to the church of Ephesus, and was often used for this purpose (Colossians 4:7-9; 2nd Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12). He is expected on this occasion to give them updates about Paul’s personal situation.

26. How did the apostle conclude this epistle?

“Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen” (Ephesians 6:23-24). Imparting peace, love, faith, and grace as a final salutation is typical of most New Testament epistles.