

"The Practice of the Believer"

Ephesians 4-6

Part 23

Introduction: In our study of Ephesians we have now come to chapter 6 and as we enter into this chapter the Apostle Paul will address the children of the family. In chapter 5 he showed his readers how the Spirit filled wife was to live in submission to her husband and he showed how the Spirit filled husband was to love his wife. Paul also explained how the marriage between a man and a woman is an earthly picture of the believer's relationship with Jesus Christ. Now as we move on Paul will show us how the Spirit filled family is to function so as to glorify the Lord.

Before we get into the verses before us there are several things, we need to be aware of which are happening in our world.

God made the family for several reasons and one of them was so it would function in such a way that He would be glorified. But there are two main problems that the family must deal with and overcome.

1. The sin nature that each of us are born with.

When a man and a woman are joined in marriage there then two sinners that must now learn to function to the glory of God. Then when they have children, they bring other little sinners under the same roof and now the challenges become much greater. In the family each member has their own will, and the challenge is to get each will to work in unity with the other wills in the family.

When the sin nature is permitted to rule in the family there are innumerable problems. There is domestic violence. There is child abuse. There is the woman who wants to rule over her husband. There are the children who rebel against the parental authority. There is rebellion by the adults against God and His plan for the family. Because of man's sin nature many families have fallen apart, and much pain has been felt by all who were involved.

2. The world's system under the control of Satan.

Every day we live we face the pressures of the world. Satan would love to force each and every family into conforming to the world's ways and philosophies. There are many families that have surrendered over to this world system and for this reason the families are extremely dysfunctional. We are by no means to adopt the values and the philosophies of the world. Notice what the Lord commanded to Israel:

Leviticus 18:3-4

³ *After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.*

⁴ *Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God.*

In James we can see why there is so many problems within the family today.

James 4:1-4

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

² *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*

³ *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

⁴ *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

In the world there are the socialists who want to do all they can to liberate children from the parents. Under socialism the state becomes the parents of all children. Listen to one of the goals of Marxist socialism:

"One of the major goals of Marxist socialism is to liberate children from the home and make them wards of the state."

So, as we see more and more of socialism in our world you can be sure this is one of the goals they are aiming for. It is actually happening today within the public school system. It is called "indoctrination."

Now let us get to our text for today. First of all let me point out the simplicity of God's teaching. There have been thousands upon thousands of books written about how to raise children. I will also point out that many are best sellers which is great because many parents care. But here in our text God uses only 4 verses to COMPLETELY instruct us as to how to raise children.

Now before we step into the text today let me give you some much needed history. In the Roman Empire there was what was known as "The Custom of Child Exposure." In the Roman

Empire the family was run by the iron fist of the father. When a baby was born it was laid at the feet of the father and he could either accept it or reject it. If the child was rejected it was often thrown out into the wilderness like a piece of trash where it was left to die of hypothermia or as it was attacked and consumed by wild animals.

Listen to this short letter from the Romans Empire:

"Hilarion to Alis his sister, heartiest greetings, and to my dear Berous and Apollonarion. Know that we are still even now in Alexandria. Do not worry if when all the others return, I remain in Alexandria. I beg and beseech of you to take care of the little child, and as soon as we receive wages, I will send them to you. If-good luck to you! -you bear offspring, if it is a male, let it live; if it is a female, expose it [throw it out]. You told Aphrodisias, 'Do not forget me.' How can I forget you? I beg you therefore not to worry."

Incest was completely acceptable. The children could be sold into slavery by the father. The father could choose to take the life of the child anytime with no consequences.

It was not until Christianity came along that the children were elevated and protected. So the believers whom Paul is writing to had been heavily influenced by society and were in need of instruction concerning the family.

I. The Call for Obedience

Notice Ephesians 6:1

There are several points to consider in this verse.

1. It is the parents responsibility to teach and train their children.

In order for the children to obey their parents they must be taught by their parents. This has always been God's way of children to be instructed and guided in life.

Deuteronomy 4:6-9

⁶ *Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.*

⁷ *For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?*

⁸ *And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?*

⁹ Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons:

Deuteronomy 6:5-9

⁵ And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

⁶ And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

⁷ And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

⁸ And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

⁹ And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

The responsibility of instructing our children is on us. Not the state or any other government funded program.

The greatest need in many homes today are parents who are involved with their children who are instructing them in the Truth of God's Word. Children need instruction for life. They do not have the wisdom to make proper choices. God has entrusted to you your children so that you can train and instruct them so they can grow up and glorify Him with their lives.

Psalm 127:3-5

³ Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

⁴ As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

⁵ Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

2. Children are to obey the instruction of the parents.

Notice Ephesians 6:1 again.

Now let me speak to the young people here this morning who are living under your parents roof.

Pay very close attention to the word "OBEY." It means "to put yourself under the instruction of another." It is also used for a soldier who is about to engage in battle, and he is listening to the instructions from his commander. Now if the soldier did not listen very carefully it could cost him his life. So the idea here is that to pay close attention to the instruction of your parents is very important and to not do so could very well cost you your life one day. God loves you very much and your parents are one of the ways in which God protects you.

One of the greatest and most important lessons you will ever teach your children is how to submit to authority. Children **MUST** be taught in the home what it means to submit to authority. One way or another they will learn what it means to submit. Is it not far better for them to learn from you than it is to learn from a cell mate in prison?

There is something that needs to be said in all of this. Many parents make the big mistake of trying to be the **FRIEND** of their children. That is **NOT** what your child needs. They have other friends. What your child needs is you to have conviction and the backbone to instruct them how to live a life that glorifies God and to teach them what it means to submit to authority. If you are going to be the "cool" mom or the "cool" dad that is their friend, then you will fail to teach this valuable principle. Your children need you to teach them boundaries and you need to teach them that there are consequences when the boundaries are crossed.

II. The Call for Honor

Notice Ephesians 6:2

The word "honor" has an interesting meaning. It means "to give weight to." It has the idea of trusting what someone says because you understand that they have years of wisdom from which they are speaking. Their word carries weight because of their experience.

God is therefore saying, the children are to recognize that their parents who are giving them Godly counsel are to be listened to. Now some children would object and say they know more than their parents.

Luke 2:42-44, 48-51

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

Jesus knew far more than Mary and Joseph, but he still honored them by submitting to them for that was the will of God.

Notice Ephesians 6:2-3

Paul reminds the Ephesians that this is the first commandment with promise. It is the first commandment that pertains to our relationship with fellow man.

Exodus 20:12

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

What does God mean when He says that our days will be long when we obey our parents?

The child that does not learn to submit to authority is going to struggle all of their lives and a child that does not submit may just find their lives ended because of the consequences of their rebellion.

You show me a child that does not submit to authority, and I will show you a child that is in for a very hard life. Chances are they will find themselves on a first name basis with law enforcement.

Application:

You young people who are listening I want you to hear this. If you are looking for a good life with less trouble, then here is the pattern. Obey your parents because it is the right thing to do and honor your parents.

III. The Command to the Father

Notice Ephesians 6:4

Notice there is a negative and a positive here. We are not to provoke our children, but we are to nurture and admonish them. Let me explain what Paul is saying here:

The word "nurture" can also be translated "discipline." The father is to be the one who disciplines the children in the home as the spiritual leader. This does not mean the mom does not discipline because she too must discipline the children. The idea here is that the discipline must not be too harsh. We could say that the punishment is to fit the crime. Now listen to this: When discipline is exercised in love, and it is explained to the child why it must be done then the end result of this is that the child learns to submit to authority. On the other hand harsh discipline will only produce rebellion.

Conclusion:

Harvard did a study on 5 and 6-year old's and found there were 4 factors that when they were practiced kept 90% of the children from being delinquent.

1. Fair and consistent discipline from the father.
2. A mom who provided daily supervision.
3. A mom and dad who showed affection in the presence of the children.
4. Family activities that involved everyone.

A word of caution:

- a. Don't expect things from your child that they are not capable of.
- b. Don't make so many rules that they cannot even move and be kids.
- c. Don't keep them from moving forward. Let them grow and experience freedom.
Don't raise them in a bubble.
- d. Don't micro-manage.