

"The Practice of the Believer"

Ephesians 4-6

Part 24

Introduction: The last time we were in Ephesians we started into chapter six, and we looked briefly at the first four verses. Paul addresses raising a family in these verses. He begins with the children and then goes to the father. Now before we get back into these verses, I want to give you some background that will truly help as we consider these verses.

I. The History

In the Roman Empire there was what was known as "The Custom of Child Exposure." 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 Apollonarian. 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.

II. The Call for Obedience

Notice Ephesians 6:1

There are two points that we considered in this verse.

- 1. It is the parent's 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. It is not the responsibility of the state or anyone else. It is the parents responsibility to instruct their children to live a life that honors God.

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. Let me show you something that happened in the Old Testament.

2 Kings 2:19-24

¹⁹ And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

²⁰ And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

²¹ And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

²² So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

²³ And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

²⁴ And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

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

Notice Ephesians 6:1 again.

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.

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. Your children need you to teach them boundaries and you need to teach them that there are consequences when the boundaries are crossed.

III. The Call for Honor

Notice Ephesians 6:2-3

The word "honor" means "to give weight to." It means to trust 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. Children are to give attention to their parents as they are given Godly counsel.

This is the first commandment with promise.

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.

Application:

There are two things that are very important for young people to learn.

- **Submission to authority.**
- **Honor to parents.**

Now I want to speak directly to you who are parents. There are several things that are required from you in the process of training your children.

1. Discipline

The Bible is very clear that those who practice discipline are those who love their children. They must learn that there are consequences when they disobey. I want to share a few verses to help you to see what the Word of God says concerning discipline.

Proverbs 13:24

²⁴ *He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*

The "rod" here is a rod of correction. When it is withheld from the child that is not love. Some people claim they love their children too much to discipline them, but what they do not understand is that if they truly love their children, they will not withhold discipline. Discipline teaches children that there are consequences when they break the rules. If you withhold discipline from your children, then you are not preparing them for the real world and you are not teaching them concerning how the Lord deals with His children.

Hebrews 12:5-11

⁵ *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*

⁶ *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

⁷ *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

⁸ *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

⁹ *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?*

¹⁰ *For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

¹¹ *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

Proverbs 22:15

¹⁵ Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Proverbs 29:17

¹⁷ Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

Let us notice an example from the Old Testament.

I want to share with you what can happen if you are not willing to guide your children through instruction and discipline.

1 Samuel 2:12-17

¹² Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

¹³ And the priest's custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;

¹⁴ And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

¹⁵ Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

¹⁶ And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.

¹⁷ Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

1 Samuel 2:22-25, 34-35

²² Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

²³ And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

²⁴ Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD's people to transgress.

²⁵ If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

³⁴ And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.

³⁵ And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

Eli refused to discipline his two boys and for that reason God stepped in and He ended their lives because of their sin.

The second thing that is required is:

2. Stedfastness

Galatians 6:8-9

⁸ For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

⁹ And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

2 Thessalonians 3:13

¹³ But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

I show you these verses because I know that you can become weary as you raise your children. There will be battles in which you may want to give up. There is far too much at stake to give up. You must strengthen and encourage yourself in the Lord and stay the course.

1 Samuel 30:1-6

And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

² And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.

³ So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

⁴ Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

⁵ And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

⁶ And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: **but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.**

IV. The Command to the Father

Notice Ephesians 6:4

This verse shows that the father is to be very involved in the lives of his children.

Conclusion:

As a parent you are competing with the world's philosophies which are being pushed upon your children every day. You have a great opportunity to make a difference in your child's life, but it will require **sacrifice**, stedfastness, and longsuffering. But it is what you are called to do so you must do it as unto the Lord.