

Day 166, Ephesians 6

by David Servant

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience, the role of fathers in the Christian home, and the nature of spiritual warfare, encouraging believers to resist Satan's lies and temptations by knowing, believing, and obeying God's Word.

Scripture: Luke 4:3, Ephesians 6:1-12

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Family Discipline"

Description

David Servant emphasizes the importance of obeying the commandments of God, highlighting the blessings that come from honoring parents and the overlap between the Law of Moses and the law of Christ. He stresses the role of fathers in raising children with love, acceptance, and godly discipline, pointing out that children need guidance in the ways of the Lord. Additionally, he addresses the relationship between masters and slaves in the first century, drawing parallels to modern employment practices and emphasizing fair treatment of employees. David also explains the significance of believers equipping themselves with spiritual armor through knowing, believing, and obeying God's Word to resist Satan's lies and temptations.

Transcript

Paul quoted one of the Ten Commandments as if he believed it was binding upon new covenant believers, and he also obviously believed that those believers who obeyed it would enjoy the promised blessing (6:1-3). Children who obey their parents will naturally find things going better for them, and they will live longer than they would have otherwise. (I used to tell my kids this when they were young, explaining to them that if they didn't obey me, I'd personally shorten their earthly lives!)

In any case, there is clearly some overlap in the Law of Moses and the law of Christ, and the commandment to obey one's parents is an example. All of the moral laws found in the Mosaic Law, which were already found in the "law of conscience" written on everyone's hearts before the Mosaic Law, are included in the law of Christ.

Fathers should be careful that they don't "exasperate" (as some translations say) their children (6:4), remembering that kids are kids, not adults. That is why God gave them parents---to prepare them, over a couple of decades, for adulthood. When children become exasperated, they quit trying, knowing they'll never measure up to their parents' expectations. In the end they rebel and find others who will accept them as they are, such as their exasperated friends. All children need large doses of love and acceptance

from their parents.

Most importantly, children should be brought up "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (6:4). Note that this is, according to Paul, the father's responsibility, not the mother's. The reason is because the father is to be the head of the family. Fathers should be teaching their children God's Word.

Also take note that Paul says nothing about Sunday school teachers' responsibilities to instruct the children. In fact, not one word in the entire Bible speaks of Sunday school, and those who have relegated their responsibility to teach their children about the Lord to Sunday school teachers generally regret it. One of the big lies promoted by many modern churches is that their fun and exciting programs for children and youth result in kids that grow up to follow Christ. Yet statistics show just the opposite to be true.

Clearly, there were Christians in Paul's day who had slaves (6:5-9). According to Wayne A. Grudem, a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, first-century slaves "were generally well treated and were not only unskilled laborers but often managers, overseers, and trained members of various professions (doctors, nurses, teachers, musicians, skilled artisans). There was extensive Roman legislation regulating the treatment of slaves. They were normally paid for their services and could expect eventually to purchase their freedom." Thus, Grudem informs us that, "the word 'employee,' though not conveying the idea of absence of freedom, does reflect the economic status and skill level of these ancient 'slaves' better than either of the words 'servant' or 'slave' today."

The Christian masters to whom Paul wrote, who lived within the framework of the Roman economic system, were very much like modern employers, and their slaves were very much like modern employees who sign legal contracts to work for a specified time period. And certainly it is not wrong to own one's company or farm and employ others, as long as one treats his employees as he would want to be treated, an ethic affirmed by Paul (6:9).

Paul's metaphorical passage about believers' spiritual armor is certainly one that has been overworked and embellished during the past few decades. In summary, Paul was simply saying that by knowing, believing and obeying God's Word, Christians can resist Satan's lies and temptations and remain victorious in spiritual warfare. This was illustrated best by Jesus when He was tempted by Satan (Luke 4:3-13). In every temptation, Jesus quoted and obeyed God's Word.

Although Paul indicates that our spiritual battle is with Satan's hierarchy of evil spirits listed in 6:12, note that he did not encourage the Ephesian believers to "do spiritual warfare by shouting at the demons over Ephesus in order to pull them down from their positions, thus paving the way for revival." That is a modern idea that isn't found in Scripture.

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