

Ephesians 6:1-9

Author: Paul

Recipients: Church in Ephesus

Location: Western shore of modern day Turkey; Aegean Sea

Key Theme: "The Body of Christ is Blessed"

### The Christian Family

- We see in chapter 5 that Paul addresses the family unit beginning with the husband and wife.
- In chapter 6 we see Paul address the children/parental dynamic.
- The family unit is a gift from God.
- We were created as relational creatures and God did not leave us to figure that out.
- The family is the oldest institution in human history.
- God made Adam and Eve as husband and wife before any other institution was given.
- In ancient cultures the family unit would've been multigenerational.
- There would've been parents, children, and even grandparents living together in one household.
- It would serve as many things but chiefly would be a spiritual training ground for future generations.
- It is imperative that we continue this as God's people.

### v. 1-3

#### Children

- Just as husbands and wives are given commands in chapter 5 we see children given commands in chapter 6.

- The first command is to obey your parents in the Lord. The second is to honor your mother and father. These are not necessarily the same thing but you cannot properly do one without the other.
- As children in your parents home it is expected of you by God to honor and obey them in the Lord.
- Exodus 20:12

#### Psalm 78:1-8

- Here in Psalm 78 we see a maskil of Asaph.
- Many scholars believe that maskils are meant to be meditative and wise instruction.
- Asaph instructs the people to not let their children forget the awesome works of the Lord.
- From verse 9 and following we see examples of what the Lord did on the behalf of His people Israel.
- The primary function of the family unit is to raise up disciples of the Lord.
- We are not simply to procreate arbitrarily.
- We are to bear children and raise them up in the way of the Lord.
- This ensures that the name of the Lord is glorified for all generations to come.

#### v. 4

#### Fathers

- Fathers are also given instruction by Paul.
- We are called not to provoke our children to anger.
- This does not mean that we are not to make our children angry but rather not to frustrate them away from God with frivolous rules.

- We are to be nurturing our children in the ways of the Lord not bogging them down with legalism.
- This does not mean that anything goes rather we are to discipline them in love in the way that the Lord disciplines His people.
- As parents we are entrusted with little creatures that have tender minds and are very impressionable. The weight of this is quite heavy.

#### v. 5-9

#### Slaves and Masters

- Slavery is a concept that is as old as time.
- It has been around since humans began commerce shortly after the fall of man.
- It is not something that we see in our culture but it is still something that is a part of our world.
- The Bible does not explicitly prohibit slavery but it puts limits and guides how the practice is to be done. (Go over different types of slavery)
- Any form of slavery that diminishes the personhood and value of anyone is prohibited in Scripture.
- Here we see a teaching for those that lived in a slavery culture.
- For believers that found themselves in slavery they were to serve their masters as if they were serving Christ Himself.
- Colossians 3:17
- We are to serve our earthly masters with a cheerful heart not simply to be seen by men but by God who judges all.
- As for masters they are commanded to be gentle with their slaves.

- They are to treat them fairly and as humans not as property.
- They are to handle their affairs as though they are under the authority of another judge, which they are, Christ Jesus Himself.

All of these facets of life would've been a part of the family unit back in those days. These instructions are for believers that are married, have children, are children, have slaves, or are slaves. They would've lived in the same household and would've been a part of the spiritual training ground that the family unit was intended to be.

## Small Group Questions

- 1) What are the elements of the family that Paul addresses in chapters 5 and 6?
  - Husband and wife, Children, Parents, Slaves, and Masters. Each of them play a role in the Kingdom and its continuation.
- 2) What is the chief purpose of the family unit?
  - To be a spiritual training ground for future generations. We are to pour into one another as we walk with Christ. Read Psalm 78:1-8.
- 3) What are children called to do regarding their parents?
  - Obey and honor their parents. Discuss what this looks like in everyday life.
- 4) What are fathers called to do regarding their children?
  - To gently shepherd them in the ways of the Lord. Discuss what this looks like in everyday life.
- 5) How are we to serve our earthly masters?
  - As if we are serving the Lord.
  - It doesn't matter what we find ourselves doing, if it is not deemed sinful by Scripture, we are to do it to the fullness of our ability as if the Lord Himself is our supervisor. We live for His glory not the approval of others so whatever we do we need to do it for His glory. Go over Colossians 3:17 again.