

February 21/22, 2015

In Christ: At Home and Work
The Truth about our Life in Christ
Ephesians 6:1-9
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Opening Discussion

1. List all the ways we are to be submissive to those in authority on any given day. Is it possible to function well in our culture without submitting to authority? Is it possible to even drive to the grocery store without practicing submission?
2. Where is submission to authority first learned? How? What did you experience growing up in relation to authority and submission? What did you learn from the authority figures in your life growing up?
3. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being terrible and 10 being very good) how would you rate how you currently deal with authority issues? This should include both how you respond to those in authority over you and how you use the authority you've been given over someone else. Why did you rate yourself where you did?

Bible Study

1. Read Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9 to capture the flow of thought. Notice that after the discussion of mutual submission as a mark of Spirit-filled behavior, Paul identifies specific examples:

Wives v. 22

Husbands v. 25

Children v. 1

Fathers v. 4

Slaves v. 5

Masters v. 9

In each instance Paul is saying that although there is mutual submission, there are also God-ordained roles that must be carried out and respected by all in Christ. With each couplet Paul mentions wives, children and slaves first. Why?

Notice that Paul doesn't instruct others to tell wives, children, slaves these things. He assumes they will be in the worship and hear the letter read themselves. He speaks directly to these groups. This was quite radical. The distinctions that kept them segmented were no longer in effect in Christ. How does this relate to what he said in 4:1-6 and 5:17-19?

2. Read Romans 1:30 and 2 Timothy 3:1-2. How do these verses relate to Paul's teaching of "Spirit-filled" behavior in 6:1-3? What begins to happen to the family when we drift from submitting to God as God?
3. Read Hebrews 12:1-13. What do parents (especially fathers) teach their children about God by the way they discipline their children? Contrast good discipline with poor discipline and what each teaches children about their heavenly Father. What did you learn about God from the way you were disciplined growing up?
4. How does 6:5-8 compare with Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:18-25? Summarize how we should respond to those in authority over us in the marketplace. What does it look like to be "in Christ" at work each day?
5. According to 6:9 how should we represent Christ to those whom we have authority over? How should the work environment run by a Christian leader be different from that run by non-Christian leaders?

Application

1. For those who have children at home, what are you teaching your children about God by the way you teach and discipline your children? What specifically do you need to work on? Do you tend to do more teaching or disciplining?
2. What beliefs about God might you have learned in the past by the way you were disciplined growing up? Is it possible you hold some misperceptions about God and His discipline because of how you were disciplined? To fear God is to respect Him or be in awe of Him but not to be afraid of Him. Which is it for you?
3. How are you doing in the marketplace these days? Do you respond to those in authority as you would respond to Jesus? What one specific thing can you work on to improve your attitude or behavior at work this week? For those who have authority over others, how are you reflecting Christ and His authority over us by the way you are treating those you have authority over? What one thing can you work on this week to improve?
4. Spend some time in prayer committing yourselves to becoming better "imitators of God" in the roles He has given you.