

BELIEVERS' RELATIONSHIPS, PT. 3; EPH. 6:1-9 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

THIS MORNING, ~ WE FINISH OUR LOOK AT Eph. 5:21 - 6:9, ~ THE TOPIC being believers' relationships in various settings.

▶▶ Today, ~ we'll look at 6:1-9.

IN VERSES 1-3, ~ PAUL GIVES INSTRUCTIONS TO CHILDREN.

THESE VERSES CONSIST OF TWO COMMANDS FOR CHILDREN WITH SOME RELATED teaching to each one.

▶▶ While these commands in and of themselves would, ~ of course, ~ apply to very young ~ and also non-believing ~ children, ~ the context indicates that Paul specifically has children who are believers in view.

IN VERSE 1a, ~ WE SEE COMMAND #1. ~ "CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS."

▶▶ Now, the majority of us here have already raised our children. ~ So do Paul's words here apply to us?

▷▷ Yes, ~ because we can guide our adult children to raise their children according to God's word.

▷▷ But we can also lend a hand and teach our grandchildren directly that they are to obey their parents.

▶▶ Scripture **stresses** obedience to parents.

▷▷ E.g., ~ in Prov. 6:20, ~ Solomon says, ~ "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching."

▷▷ And Paul brings it up in his letter to the Colossians. ~ Col. 3:20a, ~ "Children, obey your parents in everything."

▶▶ Now, ~ we should mention here that obedience, ~ as is submission of wives to husbands, ~ of believers to church leadership, ~ governments, ~ and employers, ~ is restricted as to degree.

▷▷ If a parent demands that their children do something that would cause them to violate God's word, ~ they are to obey God. **⇓⇓ 1/8**

▷▷ Also, ~ nowhere does Paul suggest that obedience requires a child to be silent in the face of abuse, ~ physical or otherwise.

↪↪ Just as in the case of wives, ~ abuse requires outside help. ~ And no child should ever imagine that resisting abuse violates Paul's command.

IN VERSES 1b AND 1c, ~ PAUL GIVES TWO REASONS WHY CHILDREN should obey parents.

▶▶ First, ~ [verse 1b](#), ~ because they are "in the Lord."

▷▷ Simply put, ~ Paul is saying, ~ "Children, ~ because you are believers, ~ you are obligated to obey your parents."

▶▶ [Verse 1c](#) shows us the second reason children are to obey their parents: ~ "for this is right."

▷▷ I.e., ~ "Children, obey your parents because this is the right thing to do."

↪↪ And it's the right thing to do because God has placed parents in authority over their children

▶▶ And we should note that in [Col. 3:20b](#), ~ Paul gives a further reason for children to obey their parents, ~ "for this pleases the Lord."

WE SEE COMMAND #2 IN VERSE 2a.

▶▶ Here Paul quotes the fifth commandment. ~ "Honor your father and mother."

▶▶ Paul is calling on children to respect, ~ love, ~ and obey their parents.

IN VERSE 2b, ~ PAUL INSERTS A PARENTHETICAL COMMENT. ~ "(THIS IS THE FIRST commandment with a promise)."

▶▶ I.e., ~ this is the first one with a promise attached.

▶▶ His comment that a promise comes with the commandment provides a motive for respecting, ~ loving, ~ and obeying one's parents.

THEN IN VERSE 3, ~ PAUL QUOTES THE PROMISE. ~ "THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH you and that you may live long in the land."

▶▶ I.e., ~ "Children, ~ if you honor your father and mother, ~ then things will go well for you, ~ and you will have a long life on the earth." ↴ 2/8

▶▶Paul tells us that the Christian child who honors his parents can expect two blessings. ~~ It will be well with him, and he will live long on the earth.

▶▶This does not mean that everyone who died young dishonored his parents.

▶▶He was stating a principle: ~~ ¶¶

▷▷when children obey their parents in the Lord, ~ they will escape a good deal of sin ~ and danger ~ and thus avoid the things that could threaten or shorten their lives.

▶▶But life is not measured only by quantity of time. It is also measured by quality of experience.

▷▷God enriches the life of the obedient child no matter how long he may live on the earth. ~~ Sin always robs us; obedience always enriches us.

IN VERSE 4, ~ PAUL TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO PARENTS.

"FATHERS, DO NOT PROVOKE YOUR CHILDREN TO ANGER, BUT BRING THEM UP IN THE discipline and instruction of the Lord."

▶▶"Fathers" can be looked at as "Parents."

▶▶It is the God-given duty of parents to set boundaries for their children and expect them to obey.

▷▷Prov. 22:15, ~ "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him."

▶▶Failure to set boundaries and expect obedience results in the Lord's displeasure ~ and leads to children who rebel against the Lord.

▶▶God revealed to the priest Eli through Samuel the prophet that he would judge Eli's family because of the disobedience of his sons.

▷▷1 Sam. 3:13, ~ "And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them."

▶▶So we see from this verse that God takes the duty of parents very seriously and will hold them accountable.

BACK TO PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS TO PARENTS IN VERSE 4. ¶¶ 3/8

▶▶ The phrase "do not provoke your children to anger" prohibits constantly criticizing them, ~ unreasonable severity, ~ and placing unreasonable demands on them, ~ **all of which are sure to elicit anger.**

▶▶ And the phrase "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" means teaching them the truths and principles of God's Word, ~ **training them how to live in a way that pleases the Lord,** ~ and advising them that it's intelligent to live that way.

IN VERSES 5-9, ~ PAUL ADDRESSES CHRISTIAN SLAVES AND CHRISTIAN masters.

OBVIOUSLY, ~ THERE IS NO SLAVERY TODAY, ~ BUT PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS CAN easily be applied to the workplace.

▶▶ So, ~ by way of application, ~ in **verses 5-9,** ~ Paul has instructions for Christian employees and Christian employers.

IN VERSE 5a, ~ PAUL EXHORTS CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES TO OBEY THEIR EMPLOYERS.

▶▶ Simply put, ~ Paul is saying, ~ **"Christian employees, ~ carry out the job that your employer has hired you to do."**

▶▶ The Christian employee should be the model employee when it comes to working.

▷▷ We should never be guilty of slacking off, ~ or being lazy, ~ or wasting time, ~ or taking extra time for lunch or breaks.

↪↪ And except for lunch and breaks, ~ we should work from the minute our shift begins to when it ends.

▷▷ Prov. 18:9 says ~ **"Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys."**

↪↪ The phrase **"is a brother"** means that the lazy person and the destroyer are of the same nature, ~ the same kind of people.

→→ I.e., ~ one who through laziness fails to carry out his work promptly or efficiently is as bad as someone who destroys things.

IN VERSES 5b-7, ~ PAUL EXPLAINS HOW WE ARE TO CARRY THIS OBEDIENCE OUT.

▶▶ In **verse 5b,** ~ Paul says we are to do it **"with fear and trembling."**

▷▷ Now, ~ the phrase **"fear and trembling"** has little to do with terror and panic. **↓↓ 4/8**

▷▷ It is used in the NT to refer to an attitude of respect, ~ humility, ~ and submission in God's presence or in the presence of other people, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and in the case of [verse 5b](#), ~ the believer's employer.

▷▷ This attitude of respect, ~ humility, ~ and submission toward our employer would include willingly recognizing, ~ accepting, ~ and yielding to their authority and leadership.

▶▶ Next, ~ in [verse 5c](#), ~ Paul tells believers to carry out our work "with a sincere heart, as you would Christ."

▷▷ The phrase "with a sincere heart" means that we are to carry out our work sincerely, ~ honestly, ~ and with no ulterior motive or hidden intention.

↳↳ We are to have purity in our intentions and not to succumb to scheming, ~ deceit, ~ or any other kind of improper motive.

↳↳ This is the kind of heart that King David had before God.

→→ 1 Chron. 29:17a, ~ NIV, ~ "I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent."

↳↳ And this is how the believer is to be on the job.

▷▷ And notice in [verse 5c](#), ~ Paul doesn't stop after the words "with a sincere heart." ~ He adds the words "as you would Christ."

↳↳ Once again, ~ Jesus becomes the model for believers.

↳↳ It is a given, ~ a no-brainer, ~ that the genuine believer serves Jesus sincerely, ~ honestly, ~ with pure intentions, ~ and with no ulterior motive or hidden intention.

↳↳ And we are to reproduce that kind of service in our workplace.

▶▶ In [verse 6a](#), ~ Paul says we are not to obey our employers "by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers."

▷▷ Paul is referring here to work that is done only to make an impression in the boss' presence ~ and to call attention to oneself.

↳↳ The implication is that acceptable work ceases when the boss is no longer around.

▷▷ Those who act in such a way are “people-pleasers” who seek to gain favor with their employer rather than please God.

▷▷ The Christian worker is called to not do this. ~ We are to do our job whether the boss is present or not.

↪↪ We are to carry out our duties in a way that pleases God, ~ and not be motivated by gaining favor with our employer or calling attention to ourselves.

▶▶ In verse 6b, ~ Paul presents a contrast: ~ “but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”

▷▷ I.e., ~ in contrast to working “by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers,” ~ Paul says that since believers are servants of Jesus, ~ we are to do the will of God.

▷▷ And the will of God for us in the context is to follow Paul’s instructions for us in the workplace to the letter.

▷▷ TPID, ~ doing the will of God in the workplace means being the best possible employee we can be; ~ ~ !!

↪↪ and doing our work with wholeheartedness and devotion, ~ even when the boss is not looking.

▶▶ In verse 7, ~ Paul’s final instruction on how we are to carry out our obedience to our employers, ~ Paul says, ~ “rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man.”

▷▷ I.e., ~ Christian workers are to do their work with enthusiasm, ~ as though we are working for Jesus rather than for people.

▷▷ And that will help us carry out Paul’s instruction here. ~ As we work, ~ keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and have the attitude that He is our boss.

↪↪ Think about it, ~ what genuine believer wouldn’t work enthusiastically for Jesus?

IN VERSE 8, ~ PAUL GIVES THE REASON WHY WE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS instructions regarding our jobs.

▶▶ He says, ~ “knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.” !! 6/8

▶▶ Why should a Christian worker follow Paul's guidelines? ~ Not because of what we will gain from our employer.

▷▷ But because we will gain Jesus' approval, ~ blessing, ~ and reward for our work.

▶▶ Notice that Paul gets our eyes off of earthly gain ~ and onto what's truly important.

▷▷ In Matt. 6:19-21, ~ Jesus says, ~ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ~ ~ ¶¶

↪↪ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

IN VERSE 9, ~ PAUL TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS.

▶▶ In verse 9a, ~ he says, ~ "9a Masters, do the same to them. ~ I.e., ~ "Employers do the same to your employees.

▷▷ Obviously, ~ not in obedience. ~ The employer does not obey the employee.

▷▷ But many of the instructions on how Christian employees are to carry out their obedience applies to employers.

↪↪ E.g., ~ employers are to have the same motivations, ~ humility, ~ respect, ~ and proper attitudes toward their employees ~ that Christian employees are to have toward them.

↪↪ Also, ~ Christian employers are to use their position in a way that pleases God.

↪↪ And they should look to Jesus as the model on how to conduct themselves in their position.

▶▶ In verse 9b, ~ Paul says "and stop your threatening."

▷▷ I.e., ~ do not abuse your authority.

▶▶ In verse 9c, ~ he says, ~ "knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him."

▷▷ Here Paul reminds Christian employers that they, ~ as believers, ~ are accountable to God for the way they use their authority. ¶¶ 7/8

▷▷ Status is not a valid excuse for abusing their authority.

▷▷ And it will not get them any special treatment from Jesus, ~ because He doesn't play favorites.

↳↳ Notice Paul's words referring to the other apostles in [Gal. 2:6a](#).

→→ "And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)."

CONCLUSION.

AND THAT BRINGS US TO THE END OF THIS SECTION, ~ 5:21 - 6:9, ~ COVERING believers' relationships in various settings.

▶▶ What's left is for us to apply what we have learned, ~ to put it into practice in our lives.

LET'S PRAY 8/8