

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH
Small Group Study Guide: Ephesians
Week of November 19 (Week 12)
Ephesians 6:1-9



REVIEW OF CHAPTER FIVE

Ephesians 5 continues Paul's thought from the previous passage—Eph. 4:17-32. Since God had acted graciously in Christ to all the believers, Paul exhorts them to imitate God and “walk in love as beloved children” (5:1-2). Paul then exhorts believers to “walk as children of light” (8b). To walk as light is to disengage with the deeds of darkness and expose them. He further admonishes the believers to walk/live wisely, making the best use of their time and understanding God's will (5:15-17). Paul's final admonition in Chapter 5 is to live a Spirit-filled life that is characterized by submission to one another among believers and also for wives to submit to their husbands as a recognition of the responsibility God has placed on the husbands as leaders (vv. 22-24). The admonition for the husbands is to love their wives sacrificially (vv. 25-33).

BIG IDEA

A Spirit-filled life is marked by obedience and honoring of parents, treating and raising children in godly ways, having an attitude of respect for leaders and integrity at work, and treating subordinates well.

OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

Our passage for this week is Ephesians 6:1-9. This passage comes under the umbrella of exhortation to mutual submission that had introduced the household code in 5:21. “As in the earlier part of the code, the subordinate group is addressed first. The structure of the exhortation follows the pattern dominant in the early Christian code. There is the address to the particular group, then follows an imperative with the appropriate object, and then the amplification of the imperative with a phrase, “in the Lord.” This is followed by a reason clause providing the motivation or warrant” (Andrew Lincoln. Ephesians. WBC. 395-96). Ephesians 6:1-9 can be divided into two sections. The first section is about children's and parents' relationship (6:1-4) and the second section is on the relationship between slaves and masters (6:5-9). Paul's admonition on how subordinates relate to their leaders (5:22-6:1-9) and vice versa is to be “in the Lord” which is probably different from the culture the Ephesian believers know.

OBSERVING THE TEXT

1. Following on from the exhortations to wives and husbands in Ephesians 5:22-33, the next groups within the household to be addressed are children and parents. What does it mean to “obey your parents in the Lord”? (6:1).

2. Compare verse 2 with Exodus 20:12 (see also Deut. 5:16). In what sense is the fifth commandment in the Decalogue the first commandment according to Paul?

3. Verse 3 reads “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” What does it mean to “go well” and “live long in the land?”

4. According to verse 4, how are fathers suppose to treat their children? In other words, what are the dos and don'ts for fathers as relates to their children?

5. Verses 5-9 talks about how slaves and masters should relate to each other. What are the admonitions for slaves as relate to their masters in verses 5-7 and why (v. 8)?

6. After admonishing the slaves, Paul turns to the masters. According to verse 9, how are masters suppose to treat their slaves and why?

CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXT

7. Read Exo. 20:12; Deut. 5:16 to understand the background of Paul's admonition to children in Ephesians 6:1-3.

8. Read Philemon 10-16, and note the instructions Paul gives to Philemon regarding how he should receive his former slave Onesimus, who is now a believer, back into his household. In what way do Paul's commands to Philemon urge him to undergo a fundamental shift in the way he views his former slaves, since they are now equal in Christ?

APPLYING THE TEXT

1. If you are still in your parents' home and under their authority, what influence should this passage have on the way you live with them as a Christian? And if you are a parent, what could you do to further your commitment not to "provoke" your children and instead to lovingly instruct them in the Lord (6:4)?

2. In the context of your positions of authority (whether you are a parent, a boss, a teacher, or some other authority), in what ways could you lovingly obey the commands that are given to masters in this passage? How should your worship to the perfect Master in heaven better shape the way you lead those who are under your care?

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE

November 19, 2023

Read Ephesians 6:1-9

Paul now admonishes four groups of Christians about how they should have harmony in Christ—children, parents, workers and managers. Harmony in these relationships is crucial in our walk with Christ.

Monday ^{6:1} *Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.* Pause for a moment and thank God for your parents. If they are living, consider writing them a note of thanks.

Tuesday: ^{6:2-3} *“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”* Consider how you might honor your parents this week. If they are not living, then find ways to honor them as you talk about them to your children and friends. Now pray and give God thanks for your father and mother.

Wednesday: ^{6:4} *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* Stop for a moment and thank God for your children (and grandchildren if you are blessed with them). Ask God for wisdom in giving them love and instruction. Also, thank God for the instructions your parents gave you.

Thursday: ^{6:5} *Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,* ⁶ *not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,* ⁷ *rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,* ⁸ *knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.* Write out your prayer of thanksgiving for your job and supervisor. Ask God to help you “work with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.” Colossians 3:23

Friday: ^{6:9} *Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.* This is the managerial Golden Rule. Even though a person comes to do a repair, you are now in position as “master.” Treat the worker as you would want to be treated. Decide now how you will treat anyone working for you, even a person who has a sour attitude. Thank God for all the people who provide services for you.

For more resources, visit www.briarcliff.church/ephesians