



Ephesians 6:1-9 | June 18, 2017

Icebreaker: When is it easy to submit with gladness to authorities? In what situations do you find it more difficult?

In Ephesians 5 we saw how the gospel completely reshapes the institution of marriage. Now we'll see how it should also direct our families and the workplace.

Children and Parents

Read Ephesians 6:1-4:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- ³ "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." ⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (ESV)

[Q] What four reasons did Paul give children to obey their parents? Where is a child's primary allegiance?

[Q] What do you think it means to honor your mother and father?

[Q] Have you had any dishonoring attitudes or actions towards your parents? Please describe. What do you think you should do now about those attitudes? Have you ever confessed to your parents and to God, and have you repented?

For parents:

- Think of your children individually. What exasperates them? What do you do that exasperates them?
- What are you doing to instruct them about Jesus, and train them to live under His lordship? Do you need to speak to someone at church about effective ways to do this?*

Slaves and Masters

Read Ephesians 6:5-9:

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

⁹ And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

First-century slavery was often more like what we might call indentured service. Therefore, it's not a far cry to compare first-century indentured service with modern employment—and draw some important parallels.

[Q] According to this section (vv. 5-9), what attitudes should mark our service to our earthly employers?

[Q] How could these attitudes affect the way *you* work—either as an employee or as an employer? How does your job allow you to show Christ's glory?

[Q] How does the promise in verse 8 provide hope for workers and accountability for masters?

Read the quote below and then review the verses that follow:

"It is *out of reverence for Christ* that we are to submit to one another, the Christ who both wields authority as Lord and humbled himself as servant." —John Stott

Wives, submit to your own husbands, *as to the Lord*. (Ephesians 5:22)

Children, obey your parents *in the Lord* (6:1)

Bondservants, obey your earthly masters ... *as you would Christ* (6:5).

rendering service with a good will *as to the Lord* (6:7)

[Q] How can *your* submission help point others to Christ?

Pray

*Resource: *Do Your Children Believe? Becoming Intentional About Your Family's Faith and Spiritual Legacy*, by Terence Chatmon, Moody Press