

Ephesians 6 The Christian Warfare.

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

The duty to obey parents is older than Christianity; as old as the parental relations.

The salvation of society is in the family and the reconstruction of family virtues, parental authority, and parental obedience. The family is the nucleus of all society. You can have no prosperous state unless the family is healthy. You can have no effective church unless the family is sound ... The family is the organic cell from which all human societies are constructed.

“In the Lord ...” Unless your parents require you to do things forbidden by the Lord obey them. Our duty to Christ is superior, and if parents require us to disobey Him, we must still be loyal to Christ. This passage has been thought by Catholics to imply that all children of Christians are baptized as infants, but the children addressed here are surely not babes, but old enough to hear and obey the apostle Paul’s command to obey their parents, and hence old enough to have heard and obeyed the gospel of Christ.

Ephesians 6:2 Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

Both father and mother ... honor both alike. Which is the first of the Ten Commandments which has a promise attached to it.

Ephesians 6:3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. That it may be well with thee. Cf:

Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

This is the promise. The blessing of long life was conditioned upon honoring our parents and it still brings blessings today.

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Parents have duties as well as children. Two of the duties are named. Provoke not, such as: Passionate and unreasonable rebukes, bad language, or cruelly using our children, would provoke resentment on the part of children.

The clause: In the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The RSV reads: "Nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." Training and restraining as well as admonition are implied. The Lord holds all parties responsible for a Christian training of their children.

Hebrews 12:5-8 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Ephesians 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

"Servants ..." The term does not refer so much to hired servants, as slaves, of whom there were many millions in the Roman Empire at that time. These were of all races, prisoners taken in war, or their children. Christianity did not violently destroy slavery, but regulated, mitigated and undermined it by introducing a new element into human life which would destroy it. The example of Spartacus less than 100 years before when rebellious slaves were crucified by the thousands should be considered. God hates slavery.

I Timothy 1:9-10 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

The Jews were slaves in Egypt. The Old Testament had no provisions for slavery and if someone sold himself into bondage he was freed on each Sabbath year or every 7th year. The clause: Masters according to the flesh. Are earthly masters whose dominion will go no farther than this world. They had better act with fear and trembling. Not for fear of punishment, but for fear that their service is not done right or as unto Christ. Christ will see and reward your fidelity to duty, even if an earthly master does not.

Ephesians 6:6 Not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Eye service is service that seems faithful when under the eye of the master, or your boss, but relaxes when he is not looking. Such was the usual service of slaves, unless they have a high sense of duty. How should we apply these verses today in our jobs that we receive pay for ... if a slave had such duty? Christianity over comes evil with good.

Ephesians 6:7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

With a well-disposed mind towards the master as if he was the Lord ... then you will have God on your side. It pleases the Lord, whatever may be our situation in life, for us to do our service well. We may engage in very lowly duties to the glory of the Lord. I was the janitor here for years...

Matthew 5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Ephesians 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free

If a man renders good service anywhere, whether he be bond or a free man, the Lord will see that he is rewarded.

Ephesians 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

“ ... Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.” The Roman law allowed masters to treat their slaves like they were animals, to abuse and even to murder them. But Christianity at once put Christian masters under restraint. Do the same things unto them or act on the same principles towards them, that the Lord requires of them towards you. So once again the golden rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you. There must be mutual good will and mutual service. Forbearing threatening which was the habit of cruel masters. Know that you have a Master Christ who is watching you. Your slave is just as dear to Christ as you are, and Christ will hold you accountable if you wrong him.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Now Paul comes to his final admonition. We as Christians are engaged in a fearful warfare as we will see in verse 12. We need to be equipped for it. Let us be strong by using the armor, weapons and means which are named in this next section.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

The armor of God ... The Christian does not oppose evil in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord. Only the armor of God is sufficient to the warfare involved.

Wiles: Greek word: *meth-od-i'-ah*; trickery or to lie in wait. You cannot fight Satan with our own wisdom and earthly tactics. We must avail ourselves with the power of God. God's armor provides protection and equips us with supernatural weapons. Put on the whole armor of God. The ancient soldier was not equipped for war until he had put on his armor. Paul was at that time a prisoner, probably living near the Praetorian Camp in Rome, as he was by Roman law under the charge of the Praetorian Prefect.

The figures of speech Paul will now use was suggested by the sight of the Roman soldiers he so often saw day to day and Old Testament verses. We must stand against the wiles of the devil who is the great enemy. We need to understand the source of our problems. We can only fight Satan with spiritual weapons. This is not a battle of flesh and blood.

I Peter 5:8-9 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

The armor was designed not only to protect, but there were weapons also with which to assail and fight the Devil.

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Principalities ... There are various dominions of evil, that is, certain classifications of it. Paul's use of some of these words here appears to be figurative; nevertheless, there were and are genuine realities behind them.

World-rulers of this darkness ... The power of Satan is limited to them who yield themselves to do evil. This whole passage, including the discussion of the armor, is figurative, setting forth the Christian's struggle against evil as a warfare; and this passage is a description of the foe.

In this verse, Paul described the spiritual enemy. He had already mentioned the "devil"; but Satan has many allies, "the spiritual hosts of wickedness."

In heavenly places ... This expression, as Paul used it, is called, loosely, the Christian religion as it is used here. Satan is not conducting any war in heaven against God! However, religion, in the broad sense, provides a very extensive and convenient field of satanic operations, the great apostasy itself having been produced in the church herself.

The forces we face are more powerful and cunning than we are, they have had thousands of years to observe us and how we react to temptations. For we wrestle. Fights then were a hand to hand grapple. Our fight is not against flesh and blood or humans. While flesh and blood may seem to assail us, the real enemies are evil spiritual powers. Our fight is against principalities and powers. These terms designate different rank of evil spirits, it also means kings, princes, judges and magistrates. The meaning here seems to be fallen angels cf:

Ephesians 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Satan is described as the ruler of this world cf:

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

John 14:30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

John 16:11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Satan is also called the god of this world cf:

II Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Satan uses for his dominion which is not only evil spirits, but wicked men, and his sway is darkness rather than light. Spiritual wickedness is the spiritual forces of evil.

Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The high places or the air, is a dwelling-place and medium of these evil influences.

Ephesians 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Wherefore, take unto you. Seeing you have such enemies, arm!

The nature of the Christian warfare is further evident in this. It is not so much an attack against evil, as it is a warding off and foiling of evil's attack against us all Christian which is indicated by the emphasis upon "stand." The forces of evil on earth have been mightily offended and wounded by the gospel of Christ; bitterness and hatred against the truth are to be expected everywhere.

Put on "... the whole armor of God ...". In the evil day is the day of peril and assault, do everything to stand. To stand the assault, and to stand victorious, when it is beaten back.

"In the evil day ..." What is meant, of course, is the day of crisis or decision; In order to stand one's ground in the day of evil or crisis, let him stand his ground today and get some practice.

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

"Stand therefore . . . girt ..." He next gives the armor that must be worn. The Roman soldier wore a girdle to which everything was attached.

"...breastplate of righteousness ..." Not our own righteousness but the righteousness of God cf:

Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the

Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith

Romans 3:21-22 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Philippians 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

The Roman soldier wore a girdle, breast-plate, shoes with iron nails, a helmet to protect his head, and he carried a great shield on his left arm which was thrown in front of his body. His weapon was the sword. It was with the sword, not the spear as other nations, that the Romans conquered the world. And these represent parts of the Christian's spiritual armor. We are to be girt about with truth. The girdle kept the armor in place and supported the sword. So truth holds the Christian armor and supports the sword of the Spirit. The Breast-plate of righteousness, the breast-plate was over the lungs and heart. If the righteousness of God and Christ's righteousness is over our hearts we can hardly suffer harm.

Ephesians 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

“And your feet shod ...”, the Roman soldier wore shoes with iron nails called hob nail boots or shoes for traction and to keep from slipping. We are not dressed with shoes, but with the preparation to carry the gospel of peace, to be a messenger of good tidings cf:

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Romans 10:15-18 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

“Above all, taking the shield of faith ...” The Roman oblong shield, four and a half feet long, covered the whole body, and was a protection of itself. So is faith, the kind of faith that fully trusts in God and never doubts, is the best of all defenses. It will quench, stop, put out all the doubts, whisperings and evil suggestions of the wicked. Fiery darts were missiles something like arrows hurled by the hand, and very dangerous unless stopped by the shield.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

“ ... take the helmet of salvation ...” The Roman soldier wore on his head a metallic cap to protect it from blows, called a helmet cf:

Isaiah 59:17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

I Thessalonians 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. Salvation, the consciousness that we have a Savior "able to save unto the uttermost," gives the Christian soldier courage for the conflict.

Ephesians 6:17 “ ... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”.

It should be noted, especially, that the word of God is the means by which God's Spirit enables Christians to stand against the enemy and overcome. The armor we have described is to protect us but the sword to fight and assail. It is all of us as Christian soldier who are to wield the sword of the Spirit. The Spirit conquers the whole world through preaching the word is the word of God. Thus Peter conquered on Pentecost, and Paul in his labors made World Conquest a reality when he preached in Rome the capital of the world. Thus always and everywhere, the Christian soldier filled with the Spirit must "preach the word." Cf:

Mark 16:15-16 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned

Hebrews 4:11-12 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Revelation 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

No one can wield the sword of the Spirit rightly without constant prayer.

ALL kinds of prayers and supplications are to be used: public prayers, private prayers, intercessory prayers, prayers of thanksgiving, every kind!

ALL seasons are the season of prayer: all times of the day, all conditions and circumstances, all occasions, all states of mind, etc.

ALL perseverance: through times of discouragement or defeat when it seems that all is lost, when victory has smiled or when it has failed let nothing hinder the prayer life.

ALL the saints are to be remembered in prayer. What an intercessor was Paul. His letters abound with the word that he is praying for those whom he remembers and for those who will receive his letters.

Even though the Christian has put on the whole armor of God, he cannot win the victory except through a constant reliance upon prayer. A prayerless Christian is a contradiction of terms.

Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint

Luke 11:9-10 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Luke 21:34-36 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Praying in the Spirit as spiritual men, for all the saints.

Our supplications are not to be for ourselves only, but for all the people of God.

Ephesians 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

“And for me ...” He especially felt the need of the prayers and supplication of his own spiritual children the Ephesians. He was in bonds and enduring fiery trials. Yet he does not desire prayers in behalf of his life or comfort, but for the gospel's sake. Even though he was a prisoner that he may still open his mouth boldly. And make known the mystery of the gospel cf: Eph 1:9-10 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Ephesians 3:9-11 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Ephesians 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

As an ambassador is sent to a foreign court to declare the will of the king, so Paul, though in chains, was Christ's ambassador sent to Rome to declare the will of his King.

This was during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, "during which Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians and Philippians were written; and, although not as severe as his second imprisonment, he was nevertheless a prisoner."

Ephesians 6:21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus (TIK-i-kus), a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: Tychicus (TIK-i-kus): He is named in cf: Acts 20:4 Col. 4:7; Titus 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:12.

Ephesians 6:22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

He probably carried this letter, and could tell the brethren at Ephesus and Asia Minor about Paul's present condition. He was "a faithful minister," and could not only satisfy their longing to know of Paul's state, but could comfort them.

Ephesians 6:23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

As was his custom he closes with a benediction. Compare those of the preceding Epistles.

NOTE.--Some have urged that the absence of individual salutations is a proof that this letter could not have been addressed to the Ephesians where he was so well acquainted. The same argument might apply to the Corinthian, Galatians and Philippians letters also, and indeed his letters to all the churches which he had founded. It rather implies that his acquaintances were so numerous that he could hardly have space to single out individuals, and sent his personal salutations by the messengers. Besides, there are reasons for the opinion that the Ephesian letter was intended also for other churches of "Asia."

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