

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR -

SPIRIT-FILLED BELIEVERS - THEIR CHILDREN - THEIR SERVANTS

Ephesians 6, verses 1-3

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

The admonition of these verses is needed today as in no other age since Adam. Never in history have children been so disobedient and disrespectful to parents as in this present day. GOD knows the end from the beginning, and He knew the command given in our present Scripture would be needed in this twentieth century.

Some will not accept what I am going to say: Children are to obey their parents in the Lord. Children are to honor their father and their mother until such honoring of parents brings DIS-honor upon the GOD who loved the world enough to permit JESUS to die for all sinners.

There are many children who love the Lord, but whose parents do not. The children have been born again, the parents have not. They drink, they gamble, they swear. To those saved children I would say, You honor your parents as far as it is possible without dishonoring GOD. Do not be ugly or hateful . . . as a Christian you should not act unseemly. Honor and obey your parents until you reach the place where you must commit sin against GOD in order to obey them - and then you are not duty bound to do so.

It may cost you your home, it may cost you your education, it may cost you your part in your parents' will . . . you may be left out of the inheritance. But it would be far better to be left out of an earthly father's estate than to miss Heaven! There is nothing on this earth worth going to hell for. So . . . children, obey your parents in the Lord. If your parents are godly, you obey them. Do not question their commands, their advice, or their wishes. If your parents are born again, you obey them. Walk in the path laid down by your parents concerning your friends, the places you go, the company you keep. Parents who love the Lord will not lead you astray.

Honoring father and mother in the Lord has a promise along with it. I am sure I will die at an early age if JESUS tarries. I will not live to be an old man. From the time I was nine years old until I was nineteen, I did not honor and respect my parents. I broke my father's heart. I put him in an early grave. I robbed him of his money and of his wealth. I dishonored him to the extent that I brought reproach and disgrace upon his name. I was known as the black sheep of the

Greene family. Because of my wretched living, I was not welcome in some homes where other young people were. (For the life story of Evangelist Greene, read "*From Disgrace to Grace.*")

Since I did not honor my parents, I lost the promise of long life upon this earth. You children who have no respect for your Christian parents, who are breaking their hearts by the things you do, the places you go, the company you keep, mark it well: You will not live to a ripe old age, because honoring godly parents promises long life and blessings on the earth. If you are deliberately disobeying godly parents, rest assured that you will reap what you are sowing!

Verse 4: "**And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.**"

We hear much today about juvenile delinquency. I readily confess that we do have much delinquency among juveniles - but I hasten to say that in many cases the fault is not with the child, but with the parents. I know some parents have done their very best by their children - and even then the children have gone the way of the world; but in most cases the teenagers who drink, curse, smoke, lie and steal have been brought up in homes where they were not chastened or controlled.

The Bible promises, "**Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it.**" The Word of GOD goes further to say, "**He that spareth his rod hateth his son.**" Today many children are juvenile delinquents because they were not brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The time to begin training a child is not when the child is three, four, or five years old . . . but when it is three, four, or five days old.

Some parents wonder why they cannot control their children. The answer is simple: They did not begin in time! The majority of children will do almost anything they can get away with. You must remember that your child was born in a tabernacle of sin . . . totally depraved . . . and it is just as natural for a child to resist authority and go the way of the flesh, as it is for the sun to rise in the east. The inclination to do wrong is born in a child. The child must be taught to do right.

Do not misunderstand me: If a baby dies, the grace of GOD takes care of the innocent. I do not know any definite age of accountability - the Bible does not tell us. Some children become responsible at a much earlier age than others. There is no set age when children can be saved . . . but long before they are old enough to know they are sinners, they demonstrate the spirit of a sinner. They scream, they fight, and they have all of the marks of their depravity. Therefore, the time to begin training the child is in the crib.

If your children do not respect you, if they do not say "Yes, ma'am," and "Yes, sir," it is your fault! When you tell your child to do something, if he replies with "I will not do it," or "I will do it when I get ready," do not blame the child . . . blame yourself. Parents are responsible for the child they brought into this world.

"**Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.**" In using the word "fathers" there is no thought of taking responsibility from the mother. The word "father" is a term for parenthood, and is doubtless designed to remind us that we stand to our children as our Heavenly Father does to us. The parents' duty is stated negatively and positively:

1. NOT to incite to anger by severity of treatment that arouses resentment and robs the child of respect for parental authority when not exercised with restraint.
2. Rather to nurture them, to do everything that is conducive to their growth and development in the continuous process of child-training . . . for such is the meaning of the words educate, culture, discipline.

When a child is young the mind is being molded, and we can bend that tender twig to shape it into a beautiful life if we handle it right. But if we anger the child by tantalizing it, or making a public example of it, storming out at the child in public, we are doing wrong.

A parent should never whip or chasten a child while angry. If your child does something that causes you to become angry, you should wait until the anger subsides, until you are calm, and then chasten the child. May I add that there is an age when whipping will no longer help a child. What that age is will differ in children. Some children will bear chastening much longer than others - but as a parent you can know when the child is too old, too big, to be chastened with a switch or a leather strap.

When that happens, there are other ways of correcting, such as taking away some of the privileges or something they particularly love, which will do more good than whipping. Reason with the child, and try through understanding and reason to show him that the correction is for his own good.

Parents should train their children in the things of the Lord. The Bible should be read in their presence, prayer should be carried on in their presence, grace should be said at the table always and at every meal. The children should not be sent to Sunday school and church - they should be taken to Sunday school and church by their parents. If we bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord the Lord will certainly keep His part of the bargain . . . **"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it."**

Positively, we are to nurture our children in the things of the Lord. In the Old Testament, the Jewish homemaker followed this godly advice: **"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates"** (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

That is Old Testament gospel - but it is also good, sound, divine advice. It takes great churches to make a great nation. It takes great homes to make great churches.

The break-down of the home is one of the main points of Communism . . . the tearing down of family life.

Whether or not you recognize it, whether or not you will admit it, the home in America is becoming a place to dress and undress, a place from which we make our appointments and dress

to meet them.

Everything in the modern home is controlled by a switch . . . except the children! The switch that used to stand in the corner, the switch that was the making of men like Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and others, has been taken out . . . it is in use no more. GOD have mercy on the children of this hour. Old-fashioned mothers and fathers, old-fashioned home training, and old-fashioned discipline would answer the question, "What can we do about juvenile delinquency?" Let me repeat: The blame for juvenile delinquency does not lie at the feet of the children . . . it lies at the doorsteps of the parents who are responsible for bringing those children into the world.

The children had no choice, they did not choose their parents, they did not choose to come into this world. Therefore, the parents responsible for the children being here owe them a tremendous debt. If we do not fulfill our obligation to our children, we will pay for it in the heartbreak of the child, and we will continue to pay in eternity!

Verses 5-9: **"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; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of CHRIST, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. 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."**

In these verses we learn the duty of servants to their masters. Servants are to be obedient to their masters. In Bible lands, servants were counted part of the household, and yet they were what we would call "*slaves*." The Greek word used for servant throughout the New Testament could have been translated into the English word "*slave*." Some have suggested that since this is true, Christianity puts its approval upon slavery - but quite the opposite is true: The teaching in our present verses lifts the servant OUT of slavery, and sets him free with a freedom never known to a slave. Verse 9 closes with the statement, "**NEITHER IS THERE RESPECT OF PERSONS WITH HIM.**" The servant is to obey his master.

The motive of service is what counts with the Lord . . . not the external show. In the sermon on the mount, JESUS condemned externalism in religion. **"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven. THEREFORE, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret HIMSELF SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking . . . Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for**

they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO" (Matthew 6:1-7, 16-21).

In these verses, JESUS clearly teaches that whatsoever we do we should do to the glory of GOD . . . we should not do it to be seen of men, but "**AS TO THE Lord,**" and if we do what we do as unto the Lord, He who sees in secret will reward us in full, openly, "**at that day.**" Paul said, "**For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day**" (II Timothy 1:12b).

I am glad that whatsoever we commit unto the Lord JESUS, He is very capable and able to protect and keep for us until "**that day**" when we stand before Him to receive our just reward. Servants, give your masters good measure . . . heaped up, pressed down, running over. Do it as unto the Lord - not to please men, but because you are a SON of GOD.

To those of you who are masters, let me give warning: Do not be a slave driver. Do not be lords over GOD's heritage. Do not be overbearing and threatening, because you, too, have a Master - even the Lord of Heaven - and one day you will stand before Him. I am sure you want your Master to deal with you in mercy, love and kindness - but remember, as we sow - we reap!

If the employers and employees would practice the Gospel truth laid down here by Paul, the labor troubles and unrest throughout America would cease to be. Thank GOD, during the reign of the Lord JESUS there will be no labor trouble - nor any other trouble - because the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters now cover the sea. A baptism of GOD's love from Heaven is what is needed by labor and management. Then the masters would love their servants, and the servants would love their masters . . . and love covers every need of the human race.

In Proverbs 10:12 we read, "**Love covereth all sins.**" In I Peter 4:8 we read, "**Charity shall cover the multitude of sins.**" In I Corinthians 13:7 we read, "**[Love] beareth all things.**" GOD's love in CHRIST JESUS - who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, not to be served but to serve - has provided for us redemption and the right to a home in Heaven. Only through the love of GOD could such provision have been made. The love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS forgives and forgets our sin and ungodliness - but only in the Blood. "**When I see the Blood, I will pass over you.**"

In the Old Testament, GOD's chosen people sinned grievously against the Lord; but when they repented in sackcloth and ashes we read, "**He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob**" (Numbers 23:21). We have the sad commentary on Lot, as given in Genesis 18 and 19. Lot stooped to the lowest level - he committed the baser sort of sin . . . the most despicable practice the human race could commit; and yet, after Calvary The HOLY SPIRIT referred to Lot as righteous Lot: "**And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow .**

. . and delivered just Lot . . . (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Peter 2:6-9).

David took his neighbor's wife, had his neighbor murdered in the front line of battle; but when David cried out unto the Lord in repentance and godly sorrow for his sins, as recorded in Psalm 51, GOD forgave him and the HOLY SPIRIT declares, "**Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered**" (Psalm 32:1). David is mentioned many times in the New Testament, but not one time is there mention of the sin he committed against his neighbor. David is referred to as the man "**after [GOD's] own heart.**"

So we see in the life of Jacob, Lot, David and others that GOD's love wondrously covers sin when sin is confessed and forsaken. But forgiveness, past, present and future, depends upon Calvary - because at Calvary GOD was at His best, delivering Heaven's best for earth's worst - and only through the shed Blood at Calvary can such grace be bestowed upon sinners.

Therefore, if GOD so loved us, we certainly ought to love Him; and if JESUS served out of a heart of love in order that we might have salvation, if we claim to be followers of the Lord JESUS we should serve out of a heart of love.

The servant is to obey his master "**as to the Lord.**" The masters referred to here are according to the flesh. Therefore, the servant is to serve "**with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, AS UNTO CHRIST, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of CHRIST, doing the will of GOD from the heart; with good will doing service, AS TO THE Lord, AND NOT TO MEN.**"

I wish I could get this across to all believers who work in public work: According to Dr. Bob Jones, Sr., one of the old-time saints, "IT IS A SIN TO DO LESS THAN YOUR BEST." To every born again person who is in public work, let me say, You may get by with a lot of things. You may play on the job and get away with it. You may say, "Well, all of the other employees take their liberties. They stand and talk, they kill time . . . why should not I?" I will be very happy to answer that for you: The poor unbeliever is working only for a salary - but my dear brother and sister in CHRIST, YOU are serving the Lord even though you work in a textile plant, a plastic plant, or any other commercial work. You are on your honor.

Your employer may trust you in every detail; and if you kill time on the job you are grieving the Lord.

We who are saved are to do whatsoever we do to the glory of GOD. As a believer we should give our employer a good full hour for every hour we are paid for. If he pays us for eight hours and we give him seven and a half, we have stolen a half hour of our pay. It is wrong to do less than your best, regardless of what you are doing. It is a sin for a woman to half-do her housework. A Christian woman should wash her dishes as clean as it is humanly possible to wash them. She should sweep the floor with diligence, as unto the Lord. She should do her laundry as white as snow. It is a good testimony for Christians to do their best.

Christianity is not a fire insurance policy against hell. We are the only Bible this careless world will read. We are GOD's signboards in a sinful world. Men watch us, and they judge JESUS by the way we live, work, act, and talk. The most menial task - even cleaning out the gutter, janitorial at the church or in a public building - the most menial routine of drudgery must be done AS UNTO THE Lord, and if we fail, we are not failing our employer - we are failing our Saviour.

We are not to do what we do to please men, we are not to do what we do to be seen of men. A person who stands idle on the job until the footsteps of the boss are heard and then runs to take up his tools or his position at his desk, is a poor specimen of Christianity. You should not serve your boss or employer any less faithfully when he is in another city or another state, than you serve him when he is standing beside you where you work! Remember - as sons of GOD, we are to do all to the glory of GOD:

"KNOWING THAT WHATSOEVER GOOD THING ANY MAN DOETH, THE SAME SHALL HE RECEIVE OF THE LORD, WHETHER HE BE BOND OR FREE."

Think of it! Knowing that whatsoever good we do, if we do it as unto the Lord, we shall receive again from the Lord. The Lord keeps a strict and careful account of all services rendered by His children - from the greatest to the most humble task.

The Lord JESUS is a faithful paymaster - nothing misses His eye, nothing is overlooked by Him. The Lord keeps a record of whatever we do even - to the giving of a cup of cold water in His name. Or if, as the widow, we have only two mites to give, that most humble of gifts will not go unrewarded. We will receive "in full" from our Paymaster when we are rewarded for our stewardship.

JESUS CHRIST is not a penny-pincher, nor is He a miser. In chapter four of the Gospel of John we have a tremendous passage concerning many things as having to do with salvation and our service to mankind in the name of JESUS. JESUS sat by the well as the woman of Samaria came to draw water. He asked her for a drink, and in the due course of time through their conversation, she received living water. While JESUS was leading this woman into the door of salvation, the disciples were gone into the city to buy bread, and when they returned JESUS would not eat. They did not understand this. JESUS said, **"I have meat to eat that ye know not of Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; FOR THEY ARE WHITE ALREADY TO HARVEST. And HE THAT REAPETH RECEIVETH WAGES, AND GATHERETH FRUIT UNTO LIFE ETERNAL: THAT BOTH HE THAT SOWETH AND HE THAT REAPETH MAY REJOICE TOGETHER"** (John 4:32, 35, 36). JESUS pays wages for service rendered - and as I pointed out earlier in this series, each one of us will appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST to receive the reward for things done in our body.

In verse 9, Paul warns the master not to threaten, not to be a slave driver. **"Do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening."** Paul reminds the masters that they, too, have a Master in Heaven, that He keeps a record, and that He is no respecter of persons. He has just as much respect for the slave as He has for the master. He knows no class distinctions. He judges all by the same impartial, divine standards; therefore, the master who is over the servant is not a special

one in the eyes of the Master in Heaven. They are all in the same category - sinners who need a Saviour; and we are all saved in the singular way - through the finished work of the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Before leaving this section of our study, let me point out that you will receive from the hand of Almighty GOD exactly what is coming to you - no more, and no less. As we sow, so shall we reap. As we treat those who are under us, so shall we be treated when we receive the reward for our stewardship. You may rest assured that faithful service unto the Lord will receive a full reward, while unfaithful service will certainly cause your reward to be burned.

~ end of chapter 24 ~

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