

Ephesians Teaching Series

Notes on Chapter 6

Please note the following resources were compiled in this series: Bible (USCCB); Ignatius catholic study Bible new Testament; Magnificat; Catechism of the Catholic Church,

Overall Chapter Layout:

The sixth chapter of Ephesians is divided in five sections:

- Verses 1-4: Children & Parents
- Verses 5-9: Slaves and Masters
- Verses 10-17: Battle against Evil
- Verses 18-20: Constant Prayer
- Verses 21-23: Final Message

Children & Parents (Verses 1-4)

Children and Parents. **1**Children, obey your parents [in the Lord], for this is right. **2**“Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise, **3**“that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on earth.” **4**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord.

Honor your father and mother – Citation from Deut 5:6. This is the fourth commandment of the first of the 10 commandments directed toward loving our neighbor (CCC 2214-18). It comes with a blessing of happiness and longevity: that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on earth.

Sirach 3: 1-16 “RESPONSIBILITIES TO PARENTS

1Children, listen to me, your father; act accordingly, that you may be safe. **2**For the Lord sets a father in honor over his children and confirms a mother’s authority over her sons. **3**Those who honor their father atone for sins; **4**they store up riches who respect their mother. **5**Those who honor their father will have joy in their own children, and when they pray, they are heard. **6**Those who respect their father will live a long life; those who obey the Lord honor their mother. **7**Those who fear the Lord honor their father and serve their parents as masters. **8**In word and deed honor your father, that all blessings may come to you. **9**A father’s blessing gives a person firm roots, but a mother’s curse uproots the growing plant. **10**Do not glory in your father’s disgrace, for that is no glory to you! **11**A father’s glory is glory also for oneself; they multiply sin who demean their mother. **12**My son, be steadfast in honoring your father; do not grieve him as long as he lives. **13**Even if his mind fails, be considerate of him; do not revile him because you are in your prime. **14**Kindness to a father will not be forgotten; it will serve as a sin offering—it will take lasting root. **15**In time of trouble it will be recalled to your advantage, like warmth upon frost it will melt away your sins. **16**Those who neglect their father are like blasphemers; those who provoke their mother are accursed by their Creator.

What if they are not behaving in a way that is godly? Honor them where they are. 1Pi4:8 Love covers a multitude of sins.

4Fathers, do not provoke – A warning not to discourage children by unreasonable discipline or restraint (Col 3:21). Parents must instead take the responsibility for the moral (**discipline**) and intellectual formation (**instruction**) of their children in accordance with the gospel. Just as parents provide their children's bodies with food, clothing, and shelter, so they must nourish their children's souls with loving correction and Christian truth. (Deut 6:6-7, Prov 13:24, Heb 12:7-11) (CCC 221-30)

What if as a parent, I have not acted this way toward my child/children? I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me (Phil 4:13) Decide to change and do it through Christ. Do not fall prey to the voice of the accuser but open the ears of your heart to what the Lord would say and how he would begin a new work in you in this area.

Refection Point: Examine how the culture is portraying the Father figure. Is it at odds with Scriptures? What can we do to honor the Word the God?

Slaves & Masters (Verses 5-9)

Slaves and Masters. **5**Slaves, be obedient to your human masters with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ, **6**not only when being watched, as currying favor, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, **7**willingly serving the Lord and not human beings, **8**knowing that each will be requited from the Lord for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. **9**Masters, act in the same way toward them, and stop bullying, knowing that both they and you have a Master in heaven and that with him there is no partiality.

Slaves be obedient – Slavery was widely accepted in the ancient world and was often cruel and inhumane. For this reason, Paul stresses the equal dignity of slaves and their masters before God (6:8) and seeks to improve the relationship between them (6:9). Slaves are summoned to serve their masters willingly and honestly, while masters are called to respect their servants and refrain from harsh treatment. Although Paul does not challenge the institution of slavery directly, the principles of his gospel work directly against it. (Gal 3:28, Philemon 1:6)

Refection Point: Reflect on situations where you have subordinates and or superiors such as the workplace, how is your faith expressed in your obedience?

The Battle Against Evil (Verses 10-17)

Paul warns readers of the spiritual warfare that rages unseen in the Church. For Christ's kingdom does not spread free of opposition or enemies; rather, it is daily attacked by malevolent spirits under the command of satan. Our first defense is the **armor of God**, i.e., the graces given to protect us in times of temptation.

To put on the whole armor of God is to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Called truth and righteousness, our Savior is our belt and breastplate. Called the living Word of God, he is the sword who is sharp on both sides. (St Jerome Commentary on Ephesians 3:6)

Flesh and blood – A Semitic idiom for what is merely human (Mt 16:17, 1 Cor 15:50)

Principalities ... powers ...rulers - Rank of demonic spirit opposed to the Church.

Your feet ... gospel of peace – Paul sees this prophecy (Is52:7) unfold in the lives of believers as they carry the gospel to the world. It is assumed that the steady advance of God’s kingdom means the steady retreat of all opposing forces.

A way to view the armor:

Helmet of Salvation:

- Thank God that you are his child
- Praise God for eternal life
- Claim the mind of Christ 1 Cor 2:160

Breastplate of Righteousness:

- Ask God to reveal any wickedness in your heart
- Confess any sin and set your heart on seeking him
- Claim the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor 5:21)

Belt of Truth:

- Be true to yourself and God when you pray or fight spiritual warfare
- Hold to the truth and cast out lies
- Examine everything in the light of the truth

Gospel Shoes:

- Be Prepared
- Share the gospel
- Intercede for the lost

Shield of Faith

- Faith has overcome the world (1Jn5:4)
- Without Faith it is impossible to please God
- Quench the fiery darts

Sword of the Spirit

- God’s Word is living and active
- His Words are Spirit and life
- Develop intimacy with the Word

Constant Prayer (Verses 18-20)

Pray at all times – A command closely linked with Paul’s preceding instructions on spiritual warfare (CCC 2633; 2742). It indicates that our perseverance in prayer must match the relentless persistence of the devil (Lk 18:1, 1 Thess 5:17) We can expect no truce between God’s family and God’s enemies before the Day of Judgement (2 Pet 2:4)

Paul is likely writing as a prisoner under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16), where he was given freedom to preach to the crowds who came to him. This would explain why he asks readers to pray for him.