

Authority and the Christian – Ephesians 6:1-9

- 1) What does the account of creation and the fall in Genesis 1-3 show us about authority and submission?

*6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. 2 **Honor your father and mother**, which is the first commandment with a promise, 3 **so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land.** 4 Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. 5 Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as you would Christ. 6 Don't work only while being watched, as people-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, do God's will from your heart. 7 Serve with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to people, 8 knowing that whatever good each one does, slave or free, he will receive this back from the Lord. 9 And masters, treat your slaves the same way, without threatening them, because you know that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.*

Paul continues to show how our household relationships should play out considering who God is toward us in Christ. The relationship between parents and should reflect the way God is a father to us.

- 2) How should we relate to God as His children? What should fuel our obedience in this relationship?
- 3) Let's spend some time discussing how God fathers us. How do you see the qualities in this passage (not exasperating, faithful to train and correct us) in Him?
- 4) If you are living in one of these relationships, are their ways the Spirit is calling to repent and pursue having them shaped more God's character and work in Jesus?

Slavery was an evil reality and social norm in Paul's day, one that we don't have to experience. But the disproportionate relationships – ones that are not just, where others have power over us, where we are vulnerable, etc. – do. And many of us have roles on either side of those relationships.

- 5) How does Paul encourage us to relate to those who hold power over us?
- 6) This obedience doesn't make any sense until the character and work of God come into play. What is it about him that changes the math on this?
- 7) Considering these things, are there any ways you should be pursuing repentance in the way you exercise authority or respond to authorities in your life?

We all fail to exercise and respond to authority as we should. We're redeemed, but the flesh – with its pull toward rebellion and exploitation – is very present with us. So, the most important thing for us to see here is how Jesus does what we cannot. He is our model but, more importantly, he is our substitute.

- 8) How do we see Jesus' perfect righteous play out when it comes to authority and submission? What would it mean for us if Jesus had walked through this differently?

Prayer for each other.

- What burdens can we bear with you?
- Do you have sin you need to confess?
- In what ways have you seen grace that we can be thankful for?