

**“DOCTRINE THAT DELIGHTS”**  
**STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS**  
**Ephesians 6:1-9**

**“GOD’S PRESCRIPTION FOR MARRIAGE, RAISING CHILDREN, AND THRIVING AT WORK”**

**INTRODUCTION:** When was the last time you met someone who had a great marriage, was satisfied being single, or had no problems with their children or work affiliations? How is it, that the **author** of the only book clearly explaining how to have thriving and satisfying relationships, is routinely ignored while people complain about their lives?

**BACKGROUND:** The instructions in Scripture about marriage, child-rearing, and work relationships were radically different than what was practiced in society during those days. Neither Jews nor Gentiles were managing family relationships in ways that pleased God. A male dominated society justified taking multiple wives and treating women like property instead of companions. Many children went unclaimed by the parents that birthed them, and the Roman Empire was comprised of more slaves than persons who were considered free.

**I. FULFILLING RELATIONSHIPS ARE MADE POSSIBLE BY BEING SPIRIT FILLED AND BIBLICALLY ALIGNED. (Ephesians 5:21-31) (Colossians 3)**

A. The family is the first institution ordained by God, and foundational to the health of society, governments, and churches. Satan launched his first attack on the family unit, and is successfully destroying families today. (Genesis 3-4)

B. Mutual submission is the starting point for healthy marriages. Do not let worldly definitions of submission scare you away from obeying the Lord. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have modeled biblical love and submission for us.

**II. CHILDREN MUST LEARN TO OBEY GOD, AND THE LEARNING PROCESS MUST BEGIN IN THE HOME. (Ephesians 6:1-4)**

A. The instructions given in this passage were given to Christian households; *parents in the Lord*. Yet these principles apply to all families. Children reared in Christian homes have special privileges and responsibilities. Learning to obey God’s laws early in life make living longer much more likely.

B. As children we should learn to obey and distinguish right from wrong. As we get older and our roles change, we must learn to honor our parents when obedience to them could be detrimental. Remember, the marriage relationship takes priority over the parent/child relationship. The “first commandment with a promise” is not clearly evident by simply reading the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:12) (Deuteronomy 5:16; 6:6-9) God has promised to destroy those who dishonor Him. “First” can mean that children are to prioritize this command, because obeying parental authority is the framework for learning to obey the Lord. *He is our ultimate authority.*

C. Parents in general, and fathers in particular, must be careful to not “provoke their children to wrath,” and not exasperate them by inconsistent discipline, unrealistic demands, or lack of nurture. *Fathers are held responsible for biblical instruction in the home.* Fathers must be careful not to become bitter against their children or discourage them. (Colossians 3:21) The Lord will ultimately hold fathers responsible for the spiritual guidance of their homes. **MAN UP!**

\* *In Roman society, fathers had unusual power over their children, even into their adult years. They could sell their children as slaves, make them work the fields in chains, and punish them even unto death. At birth, the father could lift the child up to symbolize keeping it, or walking away and leaving the child homeless. Many unclaimed children would be drowned.*

\* **GOD THE FATHER HAS BIRTHED US AND ADOPTED US INTO THE FAMILY!**

**III. NO MATTER FOR WHOM YOU WORK, ULTIMATELY YOU WORK FOR THE LORD. THE MASTER OF EVERYONE *FORBIDS* HUMAN BEINGS FROM MISTREATING ONE ANOTHER. (Ephesians 6:5-9)**

A. Various forms of slavery have existed for thousands of years. If the Lord had commanded an end to all slavery, the gospel movement would have become confused with a social revolution that would have been resisted by the wealthy, rather than a “spiritual revolution” that would lead to freedom for others based upon relationships with Christ. (Philemon 1:8-19) Sadly, wicked people, many professing to be Christians, used passages about slavery to justify chattel slavery in American history.

B. Paul was writing primarily to a household of believers, where slaves and slaveowners would worship and work together as brothers and sisters in Christ. Slavery was not based on “race” in ancient Rome. Historians say 50-80% of the population were slaves, many of whom were highly educated, owned property, and themselves had other slaves! *The instructions were fitting for an employer and employee scenario, where both were spirit filled* (Ephesians 5:18) and knew the real “Master” of everyone. Oppression of one person by another for personal gain was *never* part of God’s plan or acceptable in His sight.

C. The Jewish people knew God’s commandments regarding slavery, and freedom was always in the near future for a slave. Mistreatment was not allowed. If a person decided they were better off continuing to work for someone else rather than going free, then they would have their ear pierced to indicate their choice. (Exodus 21:6) **WE SHOULD CHOOSE TO BE SLAVES FOR CHRIST IN ORDER TO EXPERIENCE REAL FREEDOM. ARE YOUR EARS PIERCED FOR JESUS?**

D. The “Slave Bible” was published in 1807 to teach enslaved Africans how to read, but it contained only select parts of the Bible, preventing the enslaved from knowing God’s heart for equality and freedom for everyone. *It contained only parts of 14 out of 66 books.* It omitted such portions as the entire Exodus story, where God set the Israelites free from slavery, Galatians 5:1, and Galatians 3:28.

E. Christians should be model employees and the best workers because we do our jobs as unto the Lord. (1st Peter 2:13) God is watching us even when our employers are not! Work enthusiastically because He is worthy, and He will reward us at the proper time. (Colossians 3:23-24)

F. Employers are to always remember who the real Master is, and they are obligated to treat others they way the Lord wants them to be treated. The Lord does not show favoritism, whereas we have been conditioned to treat some people with favor based upon their wealth or influence. (James 2:1-9)

**AS BELIEVERS IN CHRIST, WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD AND SHOULD LOVE TO OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS. WE ARE ALSO SLAVES TO CHRIST JESUS.(Romans 1:1; Romans 6:22; 1st Corinthians 7:22) THIS ALLOWS US TO LIVE IN FREEDOM. (John 8: 36)**

**YOU ARE EITHER A SLAVE TO SIN OR A SLAVE TO CHRIST.**

**WHO IS YOUR MASTER?**

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