

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Prison Letters
Ephesians 6:1-9

Last time...life is relational, therefore the instruction in this letter regarding how we live before God and man (i.e. following Jesus) is to be the foundation of every relationship we have, starting at home with the marriage relationship.

This time...God-honoring, Christ-centered relationships, continued

- children
- fathers
- servants/employees
- masters/employers

All relationships of God's children are to be established with order by the God of order
Order is based on humility and submission by both parties
Order requires faith in the God of order
Jesus is the Lord in every relationship

This letter with its instruction in righteousness is given to the Family of God, the saints
Eph 1:1

v1	Who:	Children
	What:	obey <ul style="list-style-type: none">• hear• listen attentively• submit to, conform to the authority in your life
	Of Whom:	your parents, children of God (Eph 5:1) following Jesus (Eph 5:22-33) and given by God the authority over their children <ul style="list-style-type: none">• for the good of the children• to teach them the Person, Word, and ways of the Living God
	Within:	in the Lord, in the safe confines of the Lord Jesus Christ <ul style="list-style-type: none">• obey/submit to God's righteousness and truth and order• in all things (Col 3:20)
	Why:	that is right/righteous <ul style="list-style-type: none">• well pleasing (Col 3:20)• acceptable
	(To Whom):	God <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Lord/Supreme Authority of all• defines what is right and what is wrong• is Love (1 John 4:4)• alone is good (Matt 19:17)

Children:

Context: Eph 5:22-33 and Gen 1:28

Therefore, minor children are primarily in view in v1

What if the child's parents are not following Jesus

- renounced Jesus Christ as Lord
- backslidden, in sin (Jesus is not Lord)

and disorderliness and confusion reign in the family?

Should a child that wants to follow Jesus submit to parents who are not following Jesus?

Yes but...as long as the parental authority does not contradict the Lord's authority

For Jesus Christ is still the Lord of all (Acts 10:35), the child's relationship with Jesus is preeminent (Matt 10:37)

Perhaps the child's meek and gentle witness of Christ-like living will convict the parents and lead the to "turn and face the Sun"

What if the parents are unbelievers living like the heathen of the world

- drug addicts
- alcoholics
- gangsters
- Mammon (money) worshippers
- believe/promote LGBTQ+/Trans morality
- "Is 5:20", making themselves the power that defines right and wrong
- countless other forms of "dysfunctional" behaviors

and disorder and confusion reign in the family relationships?

Should a child that wants to follow Jesus submit to parents who do not believe in Jesus?

Yes but...as long as the parental authority is within the safe confines of the Lord's authority

For Jesus Christ is still the Lord of all (Acts 10:35), the child's relationship with Jesus is preeminent (Matt 10:37)

Perhaps the child's meek and gentle witness of Christ-like living will convict the parents and lead the to "turn and face the Sun"

Remember, the pre-eminent and foundational relationship is with the Lord Jesus Christ

Now, still addressing the children...

v2-3 Regardless of the family situation and regardless of ages of the children and the parents, these words are written in stone by the finger of God

Whether the parents are

- following Jesus Christ and living Godly, orderly lives
- not following Jesus Christ and living ungodly, disorderly lives
- worthy of honor
- unworthy of honor

the children are told by the Father in heaven to honor their father and mother

- “prize”
- “value”
- “revere”

Ex 20:12 is the 5th Commandment and the 1st Commandment (in Table 2 and) with a promise, the Divine assurance of good

Honor your parents (as long as they and you live) and it will go well for you.

God honors an orderly life

Ezk 20:11 I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them.

Dishonor your parents, living disorderly, and don't be surprised if “the wheels come off” and pain (consequences of sin) follows.

The Father in heaven will bring correction to bring you back in line

Heb 12:5-11

PTL for Rom 10:4 because we

- all fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)
- are not under the Law but under grace since Jesus took all our disobedience upon Himself

Deut 21:18-21

reminder: God is serious about sin!

v4 The issue at hand is the discipline of the children: with the heart of the Father in heaven

Fathers...why not “parents”, why not “fathers and mothers”?

God established the family as the fundamental social building block for mankind

By His sovereign will, God gave the position of leadership of the family to the husband/father

As Jesus submitted to the will of His Father, the husband/father of a family is to submit to Jesus Christ (1 Cor 11:3)

God defines what is right and wrong, good and evil

He gives those boundaries, within which is safety, to the husband/father for his family

The husband/father is given the responsibility to defend the boundaries defined by God, to defend them from attack

- from without...outsiders, unbelievers, the devil, the world
- from within...the flesh, the child himself/herself

The husband/father has the role of disciplinarian in the family

Therefore, as the witness of Jesus Christ to his children, the father is to defend the God-ordained boundaries for his children as Jesus would:

- Spirit-filled and Spirit-led
- every word and every action rooted and grounded in love (Eph 3:17)
- with gentleness and compassion and edification and slow to anger
- with grace and mercy
- never passing up a teaching moment
- never compromising the Word of God, which includes not sparing the rod

The rod is an instrument of loving correction and chastisement,
used with the heart of the Father in heaven when “learning the easy way”
(receiving correction) is rejected by the child

The rod is NOT an instrument for beating or punishing with the angry and frustrated heart of the earthly father

Matt 10:37b

Examples of fathers who spared the rod...and it did not work out:

The Eli the HP and King David

The father is not to, in his Self-serving flesh

- provoke/vex/exasperate
- tease
- frustrate
- “push the buttons of”
- let corrupt communication proceed out of his mouth (Eph 4:29)

until his children get angry and sin by rebelling against God’s authority in their lives

Because Jesus Christ does not do that!

The father is the witness of Jesus Christ to his children and he is to

- nurture/train/instruct
 - teach them the heart of the Father, the mind of Christ, and ways and will of God revealed in the Scriptures (Prov 22:6)
 - teach them about Jesus Christ...in word and in deed (by example)
- admonish/warn
 - unavoidable consequences of sin/disobedience
 - wages of sin
 - choosing life over death
 - choosing wisely one’s friends
 - pursue righteousness always

as Jesus would Personally

Rom 2:4...the father is the “showpiece” of that truth in his family
Fathers have a profound influence upon their children...for good or for evil

Fathers, the children are watching you and listening to you far more closely than you realize

“Is what my father says true? Does he really believe what he says to me?”

Your actions speak louder than your words!

You want them to follow Jesus? Then, show them how to follow Jesus

Children must get their own faith, you cannot give them yours.

Their decision of faith will be far more impacted by your actions than by your words

Fathers, at what age does this instruction no longer apply?

At your last breath on earth

e.g. perhaps an eternally important lesson to your children is how to die

Fathers, what about your grandchildren – what is your role?

Not so much the defender of the boundaries, freed to nurture and admonish

Fathers, part of the nurture and admonition of the Lord is giving them a work ethic

v5-8 Servants...this includes everyone because all people are servants, even “masters”

Every person serves

either the Living God, Maker of heaven and earth
or they serve Self/world/devil, destroyers of life

In the immediate context and in our cultural context for application to our lives,
servants are employees

The role in an orderly vocational relationship of an employee following Jesus is to be obedient...submitting to the authority in that relationship, of which there are 2

- earthly/fleshly: the employer/boss
- heavenly/spiritual: the Lord Jesus Christ
 - “as unto Christ” (v5)
 - “as the servants of Christ” (v6)
 - “as to the Lord and not to men” (v7)
 - “receive of the Lord” (v8)

Matt 23:8-10

Col 3:23-24

Jesus is preeminent!

Obedience to both authorities, is manifested in

1. fear and trembling...a healthy fear
 - earthly/fleshly: “Right to Work”,
keep the job and advance in responsibilities/compensation
or
lose the job for underperformance
 - heavenly/spiritual: The Lord sees everything, knows the things that
come into our mind, every one of them (Ezk 11:5)
2. singleness of heart...not a heart and mind that are divided and contrary to,
but a heart and mind in one accord with
 - earthly/fleshly: the employer’s direction and vision for the company
and the objectives for your position
 - heavenly/spiritual: the heart of the Father and the mind of Christ
(Rom 12:2 and not James 1:8)
3. sincerely and responsibly...trustworthy
 - earthly/fleshly:
 - not doing personal business on time being paid for by the
employer (aka stealing)
e.g. “Good Friday deal shopping while in a meeting”
Commercial
 - not “high maintenance” in need of constant supervision
 - not building a façade but an enduring solid structure
 - heavenly/spiritual: a faithful witness of Him whose work was to do
the will of God, which was to save you from eternal death,
motivated by the love of God and for another even at the expense
of Self
4. good will doing service...working with benevolence toward another
 - earthly/fleshly: working with the employer’s best interests in mind vs
Self’s best interests in mind
What are my boss’ objectives?
How can I “make my boss look good in his boss’ mind?”

promotion, which comes from the Lord (Ps 75:6-7), because of
 - favor, which comes from the Lord
(Prov 8:35, Prov 12:2, etc)
 - rather than stepping on people while scratching and
clawing your way up the Corporate ladder
 - heavenly/spiritual: an attitude of “the Lord has given me this job, I am
to be His witness in this place to these people so this is something I
get to do for the glory of my Lord”

It is to Jesus Christ that I am accountable for my job performance

I might get passed over for promotion and wage increases by my earthly/fleshly boss but I KNOW (for He has so said 7x in Scripture) my heavenly/spiritual Master sees and knows everything about my performance on the job and He WILL reward me righteously and eternally (Matt 19:27-29). So I am resolved to be the very best employee my earthly boss has in order to be a faithful witness of my Lord!

Also knowing...

v9 Masters/employers according to the flesh following Jesus have a role in an orderly vocational relationship:

1. treat your employees as they are to treat you
 - v5-8 is reciprocal
 - Golden Rule applies
 - Matt 20:25-28 is the role model
 - do not “force” your salaried people to work overtime, time you have not paid for
2. Motivated by the love of God and the employee rather than ranting and raving and threatening and intimidating and lording over
 - goodness motivates, wrath does not
 - Philemon 16 (speaking of Onesimus, a run-away slave) Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?
To Onesimus: Return to your master
To Philemon: Receive him as a brother
3. KNOWING you also have a Master who is in heaven watching and listening to everything
 - there is no Organizational Chart in heaven
 - Acts 10:34-35
 - James 2:1-9 in the workplace also
 - you are the witness of the Lord Jesus Christ to every employee
 - be the best employer every employee has ever had!

To us carrying the name of Jesus Christ:

In every relationship, in word and in action

1. Jesus Christ is Lord
2. You are accountable to Jesus Christ
3. You are a witness of Jesus Christ

If you are not,

Repent!

Humble themselves before the Living God, the Judge of all the earth

Submit to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ

Demonstrate the fruit of repentance,

turn to face the Sun and to follow Him

doing that which is right and pleasing and acceptable to the Lord