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6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Obedience of children to parents is another example of submission in divinely ordered relationships.

The term "children" primarily refers to relationship not age. Adult children were expected to respect their parents, especially their fathers who had authority over the family up to death. However, in the context it appears that the children Paul is speaking about are those old enough to understand their relationship to the Lord and their commitment to Him and yet young enough to be at home and be in the process of being raised by their parents (6:4). Disobedience was seen as an evidence of sinfulness (Ro. 1:30) and a sign of the end times (II Tim. 3:2).

The verb "obey" is stronger than the word "submit" which was used of wives and is used of our relationship to Christ, the gospel, and the apostles' teaching. In Leviticus 19:3 children are told to fear their parents - which is also a word often used of one's relationship to God (Lev. 19:14; Deut. 4:10 etc.). Obedience is "in the Lord" and is part of Christian discipleship not simply because one's parents have more authority or status. "This makes it a higher service than if rendered from fear or from mere natural affection." (Hodge, Commentary, 357)

Paul had said that as children mature and marry, they are to leave their father and mother and become a new independent entity. However, a child's respect for his/her parents should never end. To respect them was to honor them and even care for them in their old age if necessary. Also see Matt 15:4; 19:19; Mk. 7:10; 10:19; Lk. 18:20.

The reason Paul gives for Christian children to obey their parents is that it is right. That is, it is in accordance with what the OT taught, as the following show.

6:2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise),

6:3 SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

Paul quotes from the fifth of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16) and then adds that this is a commandment that has a promise attached to it. (Some have seen the second commandment [Exo. 20:4-6] as the first with a promise, but

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God's promise to show mercy to those who keep it is a description of His attributes rather than a specific promise). Hodge is probably right when he says, "πρώτη [first] may be taken here as in Mark 12:28-30, in the sense of chief, i. e. the first in importance. The sense would then be, 'Honor thy father and mother; this is the prime commandment, the first in importance among those relating to our social duties; and it has the specific promise annexed'" (Hodge, Commentary, 358).

"To honor is to reverence; and, therefore, the command has reference to the inward feeling as well as to the outward conduct." (Hodge, Commentary, 357).

In its original context, the promise was to give the Israelites a long life in the land that God had promised them. Paul re-applies the promise to Christians who have no specific promise of the land of Israel.

"If it be asked whether obedient children are in fact thus distinguished by long life and prosperity? The answer is, that this, like all other such promises, is a revelation of a general purpose of God, and makes known what will be the usual course of his providence. That some obedient children are unfortunate and short lived, is no more inconsistent with this promise, than that some diligent men are poor, is inconsistent with the declaration, 'The hand of the diligent makes rich.' Diligence, as a general rule, does secure riches; and obedient children, as a general rule, are prosperous and happy. The general promise is fulfilled to individuals, just so far "as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good." (Hodge, Commentary, 358-359).

6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Just as a husband's relationship to his wife was given after the command for a wife to submit to her husband, so the father's attitude toward his children follows the exhortation for children to obey their parents. While children are to obey both parents, the father alone is mentioned since he is the leader of the household and bears a special responsibility.

In both Roman and Jewish households, severe punishment was dealt to disobedient children. Yet, instead of being told of how to exercise this power and authority, Paul exhorts them not to anger their children. Earlier in the letter, Paul

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had warned that anger can be used as a tool by Satan to exploit issues in the Christian community (4:26-27, 31). In essence Paul is reminding fathers not to use their authority to manipulate, harass, or in any way crush their children who are persons in their own right.

Not only this, but positively fathers are to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." In other words, parents are to educate their children, ". . . bring them up, developing all their powers by (ἐν instrumental) the instruction and admonition of the Lord" (Hodge, Commentary, 359).

True Christian instruction for children is done "in the Lord." It comes from those who walk by the Spirit and have God's best interests in mind. Proper instruction is not conformed to the norms of society.

"[Discipline] . . . is a comprehensive word; it means the training or education of a child, including the whole process of instruction and discipline. *Νουθεσία* [i.e. "instruction"] from *νουθετέω* (*νους*, *τίθημι*) to put in mind, is included under the more general term, and is correctly rendered admonition. It is the act of reminding one of his faults or duties. Children are not to be allowed to grow up without care or control. They are to be instructed, disciplined, and admonished, so that they be brought to knowledge, self-control, and obedience. This whole process of education is to be religious, and not only religious, but Christian" (Hodge, Commentary, 359, 360)

6:5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

The third relational group within the household is that of slave and master. The call for slaves to obey their master is another example of submission first mentioned in 5:21. Submission is exercised by those who live wisely (5:15-20) and those who are filled by the Spirit (5:18).

The service of the slave is described fairly extensively in four ways:

- (1) "with fear and trembling in sincerity to Christ (6:5),"
- (2) "not as merely eyeservice to please men (6:6),"
- (3) "as slaves of Christ doing the will of Christ (6:6)," and
- (4) "as service to the Lord" (6:7).

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"Masters according to the flesh" is a deliberate word play for "masters" and is the same word in Greek for "Lord" [κύριος- kurios] in verse 7. To serve those in authority over them is to serve Christ.

[See Appendix 2 for slave / master relationships.]

The attitude of the slave should be that of "fear and trembling" - an expression often used of God (I Cor. 2:3; II Cor. 7:15; Phil. 2:12). This describes a deep reverence and awe, not a terror.

In ancient cultures it was believed that fear and threats upon slaves brought loyalty. But the Christian is free from the fear of men. He is enslaved to Christ. The performance of the tasks the slave had was considered by Christ as service to Him. "This would give it the character of a religious service, because the motive is regard to divine authority, and its object is a divine person. It thus ceases to be servile, and becomes consistent with the highest mental elevation and spiritual freedom" (Hodge, Commentary, 363). For that reason, the service of a Christian should be from the heart - that inner center of our being that determines our actions.

Sincerity of heart means "singleness of mind" — being just what we appear to be. It is opposed to hypocrisy, false pretense, deceit and cunning. Compare Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 8:2; 9:11. . . . The thing enjoined is, therefore, the opposite of double-mindedness" (Hodge, Commentary, 363).

6:6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

It is God's will that all things are summed up in Christ (1:5, 9, 11). This takes place in our actions on a day-to-day basis (5:17; 6:6). Here it is performed in the relationship of slaves to their masters.

"Eyeservice" is a word found only in Paul's writings [cf. Col. 3:22] which may have been coined by him to mean things done with the only purpose of trying to attract attention. "That is, such service as is rendered only when the eye of the master sees what is done; as though the only object were to please men. Servants are required to act as the δοῦλοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, the slaves of Christ, whose eyes are

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everywhere; and, therefore, if their desire is to please him, they must be as faithful in their master's absence as in his presence" (Hodge, Commentary, 364).

**6:7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,
6:8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.**

"The whole character of the obedience of the slave is summed up in this verse, *δουλεύοντες ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις*, doing service, to the Lord and not to men. This, as the Scriptures teach, is not peculiar to the obedience of the slave to his master, but applies to all other cases in which obedience is required from one man to another. It applies to children in relation to their parents, wives to husbands, people to magistrates. Those invested with lawful authority are the representatives of God. The powers (i. e. those invested with authority) are ordained by God; and therefore all obedience rendered to them out of regard to his will, is obedience to Him" (Hodge, Commentary, 365-366).

Although masters may not notice their slave's effort and the slave may not be properly rewarded, the Lord knows each good deed that is done and each person will be properly rewarded by Him. In Colossians 3:24 the reward is the eternal inheritance the believer will gain.

The words "whether slave or free" remind the believer that slaves as well as masters are accountable for their actions.

6:9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

In the Graeco-Roman world, slaves could be beaten, threatened, sexually abused or family members sold leaving them separated from loved ones forever. In this kind of world, when Paul told the masters to do the same for the slaves his words must have sounded outrageous. He is not suggesting that masters serve slaves, but that they treat them well knowing that they too have a Master in heaven who sees all that they do. Their attitudes need to be the same as the slaves' attitudes toward God whom they serve. Both slaves and slave owners serve a common Master.

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6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.

"Though the redemption purchased by Christ, as described in this epistle, is so complete and so free, yet between the beginning and the consummation of the work there is a protracted conflict. This is not a figure of speech. It is something real and arduous. Salvation, however gratuitous, is not to be obtained without great effort. The Christian conflict is not only real, it is difficult and dangerous. It is one in which true believers are often grievously wounded; and multitudes of reputed believers entirely succumb. It is one also in which great mistakes are often committed and serious loss incurred from ignorance of its nature, and of the appropriate means for carrying it on. Men are apt to regard it as a mere moral conflict between reason and conscience on the one side, and evil passions on the other. They therefore rely on their own strength, and upon the resources of nature for success. Against these mistakes the apostle warns his readers. He teaches that everything pertaining to it is supernatural. The source of strength is not in nature. The conflict is not between the good and bad principles of our nature. He shows that we belong to a spiritual, as well as to a natural world, and are engaged in a combat in which the higher powers of the universe are involved; and that this conflict, on the issue of which our salvation depends, is not to be carried on with straws picked up by the wayside. As we have superhuman enemies to contend with, we need not only superhuman strength, but divine armor and arms. The weapons of our warfare are not natural, but divine" (Hodge, Commentary, 372-373)

To be strong was a common exhortation for those who were going into battle (Josh. 1:6, 7, 9 cf. Deut. 31:6, 7, 23; Zech. 10:12). The source of the strength is God's "mighty power" which has already been mentioned as a power that is able to raise Christ from the dead (1:19-20). It has already proven itself as being capable of overcoming satanic opposition (I Cor. 15:54-55).

"Be strong" is a passive imperative meaning "be strengthened" in the Lord. The strengthening process comes from God, not our own empowerment (cf. 3:16 "be strengthened with power through His Spirit"). Since the believer is no longer subject to Satan "the prince of the power of the air," (2:2) but has come under the rule of Christ, he is to be strengthened by Him.

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6:11 Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

In verse 11 Paul explains why believers need to be strong and how they appropriate the power of God. They are to be strong *in the Lord by putting on the full armor of God*. The reason that they need to do so is because the enemy is scheming to bring about their destruction.

"Full armor" speaks of all the clothing worn in battle that provided an offensive and defensive advantage to the one wearing it. All the armor is necessary to be fully protected in the heat of battle. The armor is supplied by God (thus, the armor *of God*) - but it is also the armor He Himself wears; in Isaiah it depicts God as a warrior wearing similar armor and fighting for His people (Isa. 11:5; 52:7; 57:19). This suggests that believers are wearing God Himself, or at least His characteristics (O'Brien, 463).

The goal of the believer in wearing the armor is that he might be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. The word "schemes" is plural indicating either numerous or an incalculable variety of attacks. The same plurality is seen in the "arrows" (plural) that Satan shoots at the believer. According to 4:27, Satan tries to exert his influence over the lives of Christians through anger as well as falsehood (4:25), stealing (4:28), unwholesome talk (4:29), or any other characteristic of the old way of life (4:22). His goal is to hinder the divine plan of bringing all things into subjection to Christ (1:10). The armor guards against these evils.

The thought of fighting such a formidable enemy as Satan would seem to be a fearful proposition, but the powers of Satan have already been conquered by Christ through His victory on the cross (1:19-22; cf. 4:8). Satan's ultimate defeat is imminent and God's purposes are moving ahead in the world (2:16; 3:10). Believers live in the overlap of the ages; Christ is seated in a position of authority (1:21-22), and the believer is raised with Him in heavenly places (2:5-6). The battle has been won - Christians do not need to win it, they only need to appropriate what has been won for them.

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6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Verse 12 gives further explanation as to why the believer needs the armor of God.

The word translated as "struggle" appears only once in the NT and was used of wrestling in secular Greek. Perhaps Paul chose the word to intensify the personalized nature of the struggle with the powers that war against us.

"Flesh and blood" is used to describe humanity in its frailty and weakness (Matt. 16:17; I Cor. 15:50; Gal. 1:16). The Christian's battle is against an adversary that is spiritual in nature, both cunning and powerful - a foe so powerful that the power of God Himself is necessary to combat him. This is not to say that our battle doesn't manifest itself in the human arena (4:14, 25-31) where people become the tools used to attack us, rather the emphasis is that the war believers are fighting is of cosmic proportions and beyond the physical realm.

Satan brought about the dire circumstances experienced by Job (Job 1-2) and the distresses of life mentioned in Romans 8:38. He cast believers into prison (Rev. 2:10) and his demons bring illness upon people (Matt. 9:32; 12:22; Lk. 9:42). He tempts Christian teachers to distort the truth (II Cor. 11:13-15; I Tim. 4:1; Jn. 4:1). Evil powers used legal demands to bring Christians into bondage (Col. 2:20-21). Men and women who fear death live in lifelong bondage to him (Heb. 2:14). Death is the supreme focus of the enemy.

6:13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Verse 13 concludes what Paul has said in the previous verses. Knowing about the armor won't secure victory - it must be "taken up."

"The day here referred to is the definite day when the enemies previously mentioned shall make their assault. This however is not to be understood with special, much less with exclusive, reference to the last great conflict with the powers of darkness which is to take place before the Second Advent. The whole exhortation has reference to the present duty of believers. They are at once to

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assume their armor, and be always prepared for the attacks of their formidable enemies" (Hodge, Commentary, 382).

Christians must not be lulled into thinking that they have already won the battle or that a day of evil will not befall them. When the Christian is armed, he will be able to stand firm against the evil one. . . the armor of God is all that is necessary to resist.

6:14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

Once the armor is in place the believer is to stand firm. "Stand firm" is an imperative - a command - telling the believer to resist the enemy with resolute opposition.

Following the exhortation, the armor of God is listed and each piece is identified. The four participles show the actions that believers need to have taken in order to stand firm.

They need to have:

- 1) girded their loins with truth
- 2) put on the breastplate of righteousness
- 3) shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace
- 4) taken up the shield faith

The first piece of armor is the belt of truth. "With the flowing garments of the East, the first thing to be done in preparing for any active work, was to gird the loins (Hodge, Commentary, 382). The belt is probably the leather apron that was worn and hung down over the thighs, not the belt that held the sword. The same kind of description is used of YHWH in describing the nature of Messiah's reign in Isaiah 11: 4-5 (LXX); "But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be *the belt about His loins, and truthfulness the belt about His waist.*" The apron is identified as truth which is God's truth (4:24; 5:9) - the same truth found in the gospel (1:13; 4:15, 21, 24) and lived out in believers'

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lives (4:25; 5:9). The Christian should display the characteristics of YHWH giving Satan no advantage over him.

"To enter on this spiritual conflict ignorant or doubting, would be to enter battle blind and lame. As the girdle gives strength and freedom of action, and therefore confidence, so does the truth when spiritually apprehended and believed. Let not any one imagine that he is prepared to withstand the assaults of the powers of darkness, if his mind is stored with his own theories or with the speculations of other men. Nothing but the truth of God clearly understood and cordially embraced will enable him to keep his feet for a moment, before these celestial potentates. Reason, tradition, speculative conviction, dead orthodoxy, are a girdle of spider-webs. They give way at the first onset. Truth alone, as abiding in the mind in the form of divine knowledge, can give strength or confidence even in the ordinary conflicts of the Christian life, much more in any really "evil day." (Hodge, Commentary, 382-383).

Next, the breastplate of righteousness is mentioned. The breastplate is the piece of armor that covers the chest as well as the back and protects from blows and arrows. Righteousness is opposed to darkness.

Some see this as ethical righteousness not the forensic righteousness that was achieved for the believer by Christ's death on the cross. By putting on God's righteousness, the believer becomes an imitator of God (5:1) and will act righteously in his dealings with other people.

Others see it as the righteousness achieved by Christ on our behalf. Hodge says, "Many say it is our own righteousness, integrity, or rectitude of mind. But this is no protection. It cannot resist the accusations of conscience, the whispers of despondency, the power of temptation, much less the severity of the law, or the assaults of Satan. What Paul desired for himself was not to have on his own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith; Phil. 3:8.-9. And this, doubtless, is the righteousness which he here urges believers to put on as a breast-plate. It is an infinitely perfect righteousness, consisting in the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God, which satisfies all the demands of the divine law and justice; and which is a sure defense against all assaults whether from within or from without" (Hodge, Commentary, 384).

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6:15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

The Roman soldier wore a type of half-boot that was used in long marches. The believer likewise, needs footwear which is here described as the preparation of the gospel of peace. Isaiah 52:7 says, "How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" In Isaiah the picture is of Messiah, the lone messenger, running swiftly across the hills to Jerusalem to bring good news to the people who lived there. The believer has to have his feet prepared to bring good news. He must be willing to share or announce the gospel as the opportunity arises.

The gospel brings peace between man and man (Eph. 2:11-22) and between man and God.

6:16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.

The shield of faith is the piece of armor that protects against the enemies' arrows. This shield is not the small round one often used in hand to hand combat by Roman soldiers but the large one used by infantry men that covered the entire body. ".θυρεός, literally, a door, and then a large oblong shield, like a door. Being four feet long by two and a half broad, it completely covered the body, and was essential to the safety of the combatant" (Hodge, Commentary, 385). In the OT the shield was used of God's protection for His people (Gen. 15:1; Ps. 5:12; 18:2, 30, 35; 28:7, etc.). He is the shield. Here the shield is the shield of faith.

The faith can be either subjective or objective faith. If subjective faith is being spoken of, then the believer is being told to lay hold of God's promises and have confidence that they are sufficient in protecting him in battle. In this way, believers will be able to extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. If it is objective faith, then "the faith here intended is that by which we are justified, and reconciled to God through the blood of Christ. It is that faith of which Christ is the object; which receives him as the Son of God and the Savior of men. It is the faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen; which at once apprehends or discerns, and receives the things of the Spirit. it overcomes the world, as is proved by so many examples in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews" (Hodge, Commentary, 386).

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In Ancient warfare arrows were often dipped in pitch and lit on fire causing havoc among the soldiers. Shields soaked in water would extinguish these arrows. Satan's arrows are of various types: temptation, threats, ungodly behavior, despair, and external assaults such as persecution and false teaching.

6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

The Roman helmet was made of bronze and had protective cheek pieces to guard the face and head. In Isaiah 59:17 God wears "a helmet of salvation on His head" as he goes forth to save His people. The helmet the believer wears is his salvation that protects from the enemies' death blow.

The power and liberation from sin that the gospel brings is more powerful than anything that the enemy possesses.

The only offensive weapon mentioned is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. The sword is the short sword which was effective in close combat. The Holy Spirit is the source that makes the sword lethal to the enemy. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon Messiah (Isaiah 11:5) where the sword that came from His mouth represented His Word (Rev. 19:15). The weapon that Messiah carries into battle is available for Christians to use. It is the faithful proclaiming of the Word of God that defeats the enemy.

6:18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

Verses 18-20 focus on the need for prayer in battle. Prayer is essential in the use of every weapon and piece of armor. It is also essential to know the dimensions of God's love (3:14-21) and the power of God (1:15-23). All types of prayer are to be made "at all times" and are to be guided by the Holy Spirit (compare 2:18, 22; 5:18).

To be committed to this, believers need to stay alert (cf. Mk. 14:38; Lk. 21:34-36; Mk. 13:32-37). They are not to tire, and they are not to be the sole object of their prayers but they are to pray for other believers as well.

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6:19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

"What the apostle wishes the Ephesians to pray for, was not any temporal blessing, not even his deliverance from bonds, that he might be at liberty more freely to preach the Gospel, but that God would enable him to preach with the freedom and boldness with which he ought to preach" (Hodge, Commentary, 393).

6:20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Paul also asks for prayer for himself.

"An ambassador is one through whom a sovereign speaks. . . The apostles, as sent by Christ with authority to speak in his name, and to negotiate with men, proposing the terms of reconciliation and urging their acceptance, were in an eminent sense his ambassadors" (Hodge, Commentary, 394).

6:21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

6:22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

6:23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love.

This is the usual form of salutation or benediction.

"These blessings are sought ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father and Son are united as objects of worship and the source of spiritual and saving blessing. He from whom Paul sought these blessings, is he to whom those who need them must look in order to obtain them" (Hodge, Commentary, 395).

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"Love to Christ includes adoring admiration of his person, desire for his presence, zeal for his glory, and devotion to his service . . . love to Christ is the indispensable condition of salvation." (Hodge, Commentary, 395).