

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes May 28, 2008

Ephesians 6:1-9 (Part 2)

- 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 be well with you and that you may live long on the earth."
- 4: Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger,
but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
- 5: Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters,
with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ;
- 6: not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers,
but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,
- 7: rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men,
- 8: knowing that whatever good any one does,
he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.
- 9: Masters, do the same to them, and forbear threatening,
knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven,
and that there is no partiality with him.

Introduction: Today we continue studying a portion of St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians dealing with issues of the family, specifically the raising of children and work. As with the verses on the relationship between husbands and wives, many Christians wish St. Paul had not addressed these issues. Our culture is very divided over what a parent can and should do in raising their children; and in many cases, especially in some public places, if parents carry out the clear instructions of Scripture, they may find themselves in court fighting to retain custody of their own children. And to some, St. Paul's instructions on the relationship between slaves and masters sounds down right un-Christian. How do we apply these passages in today's world? This is part of what we'll be discussing today on *Deep in Scripture*.

House cleaning items...

- Today's Special: "**Discipline the Lasts a Lifetime**" by Dr. Ray Guarendi
- We want your input!!! Phone: On air phone number: **1-800-664-5110** Off air: **1-740-450-1175**
Email: marcus@deepinscripture.com
Forum: <http://www.chnetwork.org/forums/forum51>

REVIEW: Today we're continuing our discussion of Ephesians:

- **In the first three chapters**, St. Paul describes the changes that take place in our lives once we have heard, believed, and then were sealed with the Holy Spirit in baptism, while **in the second half of Ephesians**, St. Paul exhorts the newly baptized Gentile believers how they must live out this new life, which requires surrender and faithful obedience.
 - In other words, St. Paul, in what we believe was a homily to be read at the liturgy when newly baptized Gentile believers were received into the Church, first gives them truth / facts about their new life in Christ, and then tells them how their lives ought to be different.
- **The overall context of chapters 4-6 addresses life within the Church, the Body of Christ.**
 - 5:22-33, Christian Marriage within the Church;
 - This week, we continue our discussion of chapter 6, verses 1-9, in which St. Paul addresses the relationships, first, between parents and children, and then, second, between slaves and masters.

Underlying St. Paul's instructions are FIVE VERY IMPORTANT ASSUMPTIONS / NEEDS:

- As I mentioned last week, I'm very hesitant to use Ephesians 6:1-4 as a template for how to raise and discipline our children. The books of the Bible were not compiled nor intended to be used as a self-explanatory manual for living, otherwise sincere believers would not come up with such divergent opinions on what it says.
- Scripture must be understood as a part of Sacred Tradition, and interpreted within the context of the entire Bible and under the guidance of the Magisterium
- There are many needs in the family and in the workplace, but as St. Paul considered the struggles of this growing church made up of converts from Judaism and paganism, at least four issues / needs seemed particularly important for St. Paul to emphasize.
- Five of these underlying assumptions are **OUR NEED TO...**
 1. **LIVE BY CORRECT PRIORITIES;**
 2. **RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT HIERARCHICAL ORDER.**
 3. **RECOGNIZE AND RESIST OUR SINFULNESS;**
 4. **LEARN TO LIVE IN SUBMISSION AND OBEDIANCE;**
 5. **LEAD WITH SERVANT LOVE.**
- There is much in Scripture on raising children, but what is most important is to recognize the underlying assumptions upon which St. Paul builds his instructions.

1. OUR NEED TO LIVE BY CORRECT PRIORITIES:

- Our modern lives are inundated with conflicting priority systems.
- St. Paul emphasizes FOUR PRIORITIES in the order of his presentation:
 1. CHRIST (This presumes membership in His Church) [5:21]
 2. MARRIAGE (Vocation) [5:22-33]
 3. FAMILY / CHILDREN [6:1-4]
 4. WORK [6:5-9]
- **Note the assumption & importance of correct priorities within this text & what happens otherwise?**
 - “children obey...honor mother and father.”
 - The family breaks down when children place the views of others above their parents.
 - “Fathers bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
 - The family breaks down when parents put themselves above God and replace His priorities with their own or the culture's.

2. OUR NEED TO RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT HIERARCHICAL ORDER

- The problem St. Paul was addressing was the misunderstanding and misapplication of Christian freedom and equality (note the orders of the people he is addressing).
- The model for structure is the Church (4:11-12)
 - The order of marriage is built on this mystery (5:22-33)
 - There is a similar hierarchical order within the family: parents have responsibility over children (6:1)
 - There is a similar hierarchical order within the workplace (6:5)
- **Note the assumption & importance of correct priorities within this text & what happens otherwise?**
 - When the hierarchical order of the family is replaced by either egalitarianism or the “child-centered family,” chaos eventually ensues and consciences are never formed correctly.
 - Same thing is true in the workplace...

3. OUR NEED TO RECOGNIZE AND RESIST OUR SINFULNESS:

- St. Paul addresses two extremes of how he saw sinfulness has been expressed within the Church, within marriages, within the family, and within the workplace, both were described in Genesis 3:16b:
 - “...your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”
 - One result of the Fall will be a constant battle for control.
- 1. **REBELLION against AUTHORITY:**
 - Iaiety vs leadership; wives vs husbands; children vs parents; slaves vs masters.

2. **ABUSE of AUTHORITY.**

- Leadership over laity; husbands over wives; fathers over children; masters over slaves.
- St. Paul gave TWO SOLUTIONS...which are true for all levels of the Church's hierarchical structure:
 1. SUBMISSION as to CHRIST;
 2. SERVANT LEADERSHIP in modeling CHRIST.

4. **OUR NEED TO LIVE IN SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE AS TO CHRIST: (6:1-3, 5-8)**

- It's very difficult to live in submission and obedience to God and his Church and to submit to authorities within the workplace **unless** we have first learned to live in submission and obedience to our parents.
- Throughout the entire history of our Judeo-Christian faith, the advice for rearing children has been the same:
 - *"The **fear of the Lord** is the beginning of knowledge."* (Proverbs 1:7)
 - *"My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding...then you will understand the **fear of the Lord** and find the knowledge of God."* (Proverbs 2:1-5)
 - *"Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and **make holiness perfect in the fear of God.**"* (2 Corinthians 7:1)
 - *"Let us reverence the Lord Jesus Christ whose blood was given for us. Let us respect those who rule over us. Let us honor our elders. **Let us rear the young in the fear of God ... Let our children have a Christian training. Let them learn the value God sets on humility, what power pure love has with him, how good and excellent it is to fear him, and how this means salvation to everybody who lives in his fear with holiness and a pure conscience.**"* (1 Clement 21:6-9)
- Respectful submission and obedience is a necessary ingredient at all levels of the Body of Christ (the Church), especially for successful families as well as work environments:
 - Children to parents: (6:1-3)
"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.'"
 - Slave to masters (workers to bosses): (6:5-8)
Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good any one does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

5. **OUR NEED TO LEAD WITH SERVANT LOVE: (6:4, 9)**

- Obedience is best learned & practiced in an atmosphere of Christ-centered love:
 - True at all levels of the Body of Christ (the Church)! (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
*"Love is patient and kind;
love is not jealous or boastful;
it is not arrogant or rude.
Love does not insist on its own way;
it is not irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."*
- This servant leadership explained by Jesus in today's Gospel: (Mark 10:32-45)
"Jesus summoned them and said to them, 'You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.'"

- Especially true in the home: fathers to sons: (6:4)
 - "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*
 - "Provoke" = from Grk term for anger, meaning to make angry; exasperate;
 - (parallel in) Colossians 3:21, "...lest they become discouraged."
 - Therefore, discipline needs to be tempered & guided, but not replaced by love!
- In the workplace: masters to slaves (bosses to workers): (6:9)
 - "Masters, do the same to them, and forbear threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him."*
 - (parallel in) Colossians 4:1,
 - "Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a master in heaven."*