



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

EPHESIANS LESSON 6

Paul continues with the subject of mutual submission (5:21) as he deals with the God-given responsibility of Christian children, parents, masters, and slaves. In chapter 5, Paul reminds us that we need to be filled with the Spirit, which enables us to submit to one another in the fear of the Lord (5:21). This chapter illustrates the display of the Kingdom of God in our homes. Paul then concludes the book by reminding the Ephesians that although the inheritance they will receive is rich and their blessings are abundant, there will still be hardships in their daily lives. But be encouraged! It's possible to stand strong in the Lord and the power of His might (6:10)!

First Day

1. Read Ephesians 6:1-24. For each section, list the facts you find.

Verses 1-4

Verses 5-9

Verses 10-20

Verses 21-24

2. Are there any repeated words or phrases in this chapter?

3. How does this chapter relate to chapter 5?

4. Re-read verses 1-4. Also read Colossians 3:20. What are children commanded to do? Why?

5. In verse 2, Paul cites the fifth commandment. (Exodus 20:12) What promise is attached?

6. What does it mean to "honor" your father and mother? Give practical ways that you can show honor and respect for your parents.

Obedience is the willingness to listen and take heed to another's directions. Strauss said, "Obedience is the first law between the Creator and His creation." The first lessons of obedience are to be learned in the home. By obeying their parents, children will escape a good deal of sin and danger and avoid things that could shorten their lives. Wiersbe said this: **"Sin robs, obedience enriches."**

7. In your own words, explain the importance of teaching children to obey their parents at an early age. What can happen if kids are not taught this principle?

8. At what age do you think this command becomes void?

9. Do children have to obey everything their parents say?

10. Are you teaching your children to obey? Are there any areas in which you are too lax or lenient? What "could" be the consequences of that?

11. How is partial or delayed obedience really disobedience? (Do you let your kids get away with that?)

12. Last question. As a child of God, have you been obeying your Heavenly Father in all things? Is partial or delayed obedience characteristic of your behavior toward God? Think about it ...

Memory Verse of the Week: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." Ephesians 6:10

Second Day

Meditate on your memory verse. May it encourage you today!

1. Continue reading Ephesians 6:1-4. We concentrated on the children's role yesterday, so now let's take a look at the role of the parent. What warning does Paul give to the fathers (that applies to us moms too!) in verse 4?

The Christian faith dramatically affected the status of children, as well as women. At the time of Paul's writings, the Roman father had supreme and complete authority over his children. William Barclay tells us, "A Roman father had absolute power over his family. He could sell them as slaves; he could make them work in the fields, even in chains; he could take the law into his own hands, for the law was in his own hands; and punish as he liked. He could even inflict the death penalty on his child." Paul is pointing out that parents will answer to God on how they raise their children. Human fathers are to care for their families as God the Father cares for His.

2. What does the word "provoke" mean? Give some examples of how we, as parents, can provoke our kids to wrath. (Also read Colossians 3:21.) (Do you ever exasperate your kids? How?)

3. Name some ways that we can encourage our kids. (Choose two specific ways to encourage your kids this week.)

There is obviously a balance between correction and encouragement. If we overly discipline we could exasperate our children, causing them to be resentful. We shouldn't place unreasonable demands on them, humiliate them, or ridicule them. Verse 4 tells us to bring them "up" not beat them

down. Encouragement, on the other hand, causes them to blossom and develop their gifts. Lack of correction, however, breeds rebellion and lack of respect for authority. Martin Lloyd-Jones said, "To the one extreme we need to say: The opposite of wrong discipline is not the absence of discipline, but right discipline, true discipline. To the other extreme we need to say: The opposite of no discipline at all is not cruelty, it is balanced discipline, it is controlled discipline."

4. What is the father supposed to do? What does Proverbs 22:6 tell us?

The verb "bring up" literally means "to nourish or feed tenderly." Training is better translated "training by discipline, even by punishment," accenting on the correction of the young. It is the word used in Hebrews 12 both of earthly fathers and also of our Heavenly Father who "disciplines us for our good." (Hebrews 12:1-6; Proverbs 13:24, 22:15, 29:15)

5. How can a parent nourish their children tenderly?

6. How is training children similar to training for an athletic event?

7. Practically speaking, how do you train children in the ways of the Lord?

8. Are you taking the time to train your children in the ways of the Lord? Are you nourishing them, disciplining them, and doing all you can to encourage them to be whom God made them to be? As a mom, is training and nurturing your children your first priority?

9. Read 1 Samuel 2:12-29 for an example of a man who didn't raise his children correctly. What facts do you find?

10. Are there any changes you need to make in how you are "parenting" lately? What steps do you plan to take?

11. Write your thoughts on Ephesians 6:1-4. How has it encouraged you, convicted you, or challenged you? Then write a prayer to the Lord, asking for His wisdom as you raise your children?

That's it for today. Tomorrow we'll take a look at how a servant should act on the job and how a master should treat them. Remember, Paul's pointing out that each person has a responsibility to fulfill their God-given roles. This is done only through the power of the Holy Spirit! Ladies, are you letting the Spirit control you?

Third Day

What's your memory verse? Are you depending on His power?

Paul now continues his teaching on submission as he deals with both the slave and the master. We can apply this teaching today to the relationship between an employee and an employer. Dr. Ironside wrote this: "The instruction which of old was given to slaves now applies to all employees. Slaves were purchased with the money of the master, or born into the house and raised up by the master, but today we enter into an agreement, we sell our labor, and in that way enter into a certain relationship which makes us just as responsible to heed the admonition here."

1. Begin today by reading Ephesians 6:5-9. (Also read 1 Timothy 6:1-2.)
In your own words, describe the responsibility of a Christian servant.

2. Whom is a slave or an employee ultimately working for?

3. What should be our attitude as we work for or serve others?

4. What is "eye-service"? Give an example of giving eye-service to an employer.

Paul's point was for Christian slaves to see that their primary responsibility was to serve the Lord. Once they understood that, their service to their master should improve. These principles were designed to lessen the cultural and social gap between slave and slave owner.

William Barclay states; "Nearly every household was affected by master/slave relationships. It has been estimated that there were some 60,000,000 slaves in the Roman Empire, and that as many as one third of the populations of large cities such as Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus were slaves." While it is true that some slaves suffered at the hands of their master, Roman slavery in the first century was more humane and civilized than the American/African slavery practiced in our country. Being a slave didn't determine his social class. Oftentimes slaves were given the social status of their owners. It was usually impossible to tell a slave by looking at him. Some slaves even lived separately from their owners. Many people became slaves voluntarily to gain entrance into society and become a Roman citizen.

5. How would you describe your work ethic? What is your attitude while you work? Are you willing to go the extra mile, or are you full of complaints and negative comments?

6. Are you training your children to have a Godly work ethic? (How can we do this?)

7. What encouragement is found for those who heed this teaching in verse 8?

8. How can work become "worship"?

When no one else is looking, God is. We need to remember that we are here to please God, not man. With that as our goal, our service will be sweet.

“There is no work better than another to please God; to pour water, to wash dishes, to be a cobbler, or an apostle, all is one; to wash dishes and to preach is all one, as touching as the deed, to please God.”

William Tyndale

9. Philippians 2:12 tells us to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling.” It’s been said that Christianity is not something we work “for” but something we work “out.” As an employee, how do we work with “fear and trembling”? What does that mean?

10. Explain the role of a Christian employer. (Who is his example?)

11. Is playing favorites a Biblical practice? Why or why not?

12. Matthew 7:12 gives us what is sometimes called the “Golden Rule.” How should this be practiced by both employee and employer?

13. Last question. Whether or not you are an employer, how do you treat those who are under your authority? Think about it

See you tomorrow! I pray that we take the admonitions in this chapter to heart. May we not only read the Word, but live the Word. May others see Christ in how we handle the relationships in our lives.

Fourth Day

What's your memory verse? Can you share it with a friend to encourage them today?

Paul now concludes his letter to the Ephesians by bringing them back to a sad reality -- we definitely will face opposition. There are real enemies that want to rob us of our inheritance. There is an unseen battle raging around us, as much as we'd like to ignore it. The battle will continue until the peace of Heaven is attained and we meet our Savior face to face. Paul exhorts the Ephesians as soldiers by giving them some important information on how to stand strong in the midst of the battle.

1. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. What two commands does Paul give in verses 10-11? Why is this such a good balance of Scripture?

2. What is the purpose of the armor? How much should we wear? Why?

3. Who are we fighting against? Why is it so important to know who the enemy is and not to underestimate him?

4. Can you explain the progression of "to stand," "withstand," and having done all "to stand?"

Paul desires the Ephesians to exhibit Christian stability. He doesn't want them to be tossed to and fro, or be easily swayed or deceived. The whole armor is needed to be fully protected against the enemy of our soul.

5. What's the danger of trying to fight the battle in your own strength?
Will you be found standing at the end of the day?

Are you fighting any battle right now in your own strength? Are you ready to trust in His power and might?

Paul was very familiar with Roman soldiers and the armor they wore. Unfortunately, he was even chained by the wrist to one for a period of time. (Acts 28:16) (Is that why he mentions the chain in verse 20?) Paul gives us a great picture of armor, comparing our spiritual armor with that of a real soldier.

Soldiers wore a belt to gather their tunic, allowing them to move without restrictions. The belt also held their sword and kept them from tripping or falling down.

6. How does His "truth" hold us together and keep us from falling? Why is it the first piece of armor that Paul mentions?

The soldier's breastplate covered his vital organs and was usually made of metal, leather, or animal horns. His breastplate was almost impossible to penetrate.

7. Whose righteousness do we wear? Read Philippians 3:9, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and Romans 3:22. How does it protect us?

Some believe that this righteousness is referring to God's gracious act of making sinners right before Him through Christ, giving us the ability to stand before Him, uncondemned. Others believe Paul is talking about righteous living, or "holy and upright living in accordance with God's standard." In other words, our righteous character and conduct is a way to resist temptation.

Paul tells us that our feet need to be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. The boot Paul is talking about is a half-boot, made of leather. It had heavy, studded soles, and it was tied to the soldier's ankles and shins with straps. These shoes prevented sliding. The NEB translates this verse like this; "Let the shoes on your feet be the Gospel of peace, to give you a firm footing." This also may refer to a Christian's readiness to spread the Gospel.

8. What is the purpose of the shield of faith, according to verse 16?

The shield that Paul was referring to was a very long one that covered the whole body. It consisted of two layers of wood glued together and covered first with linen and then with hide, then bound with iron above and below. It was designed to put out arrows that were dipped in pitch which were lit and fired.

9. What kind of darts has the enemy been throwing at you lately? How can faith protect you?

The helmet was usually made of iron or bronze. Almost nothing could pierce it.

10. How do you think salvation can act as a helmet? Also read 1 Thessalonians 5:8. Why does our head need protection?

Tomorrow we'll take a look at our only weapon that can be used for offense as well as defense. I pray that you will remember to clothe yourself in the armor of God every minute of the day. Don't get caught unprotected and unprepared. Stand strong in the Lord!

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory. How did it minister to you this week?

1. Begin today by reading through Ephesians 6:10-20 again. What is the Word of God likened to? Why? (Read Hebrews 4:12)

2. How can the Word of God be used offensively during a battle? How can it be used defensively?

3. How well are you getting acquainted with your sword? Do you know how to use it? (How much time do you spend "sharpening" it?)

Remember this:

The soldier doesn't give power to the sword, the sword gives power to the soldier.

God provides each Christian with the armor he needs, but it's his responsibility to pick it up and put it on. We can't be lazy or negligent as we dress for battle. The battle rages on every side, so we must be covered.

4. Are there any pieces that you have been neglecting to use? What areas in your life are most often attacked by the enemy? (Which piece can help you?)

5. What else do we need for the battle, according to verse 18? Why? How can prayer be used along with the Word to defeat the evil one? (Matthew 4:1-11)

6. How can we stay alert and be "watchful"? (Are you?)

William Gurnall was a Puritan minister in 1655. He said this about God's armor: "In Heaven we shall appear not in armor but in robes of glory; but here they are to be worn night and day; we must walk, work, and sleep in them, or else we are not true soldiers of Christ. In this armor we are to stand and watch, and never relax our vigilance, for the saint's sleeping time is Satan's tempting time; every fly dares to venture to creep on a sleeping lion."

7. What was Paul's specific prayer request for himself in verses 19-20? (What kind of freedom did Paul desire?)

Paul lets the Ephesians know that he trusts his friend Tychicus with the job of bringing his letter to them, as well as reporting the details of Paul's life and ministry while in prison.

8. According to verse 22, what else does Paul want Tychicus to do? What does that tell us about Paul's feelings for the Ephesians?

9. Paul calls his friend a beloved brother and a faithful minister. Do you have any friends that could be described in the same way? Take some time and let them know how much they mean to you. Maybe write a letter or give them a call. (Are you that kind of friend?)

10. What four beautiful words or blessings does Paul close his letter with? What two were found in his greeting?

Paul sums up his letter with two words: grace and peace. John Stott said, "Because of Christ we now have peace with God through reconciliation, and grace is the reason why and the means by which He did it."

11. From chapter 6, give the Scripture reference that matches Paul's exhortation:

- A. Be powerful
- B. Be protected
- C. Be prepared
- D. Be prayerful
- E. Be peaceful

There is something interesting to note about the armor. Jesus Christ Himself is the definition of every piece. Jesus is our truth. Jesus is our righteousness. Jesus is our peace. Jesus is our shield. Jesus is our salvation.

We've come to the end of our study of Ephesians. I pray that you were encouraged and blessed beyond measure as you realized the inheritance you have received in Christ Jesus. I pray that you understand how absolutely rich you are in Christ. You are a princess! (Are you wearing your tiara?) You are an authentic Cinderella! I also pray that each of you know the hope of your calling and have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior. If you haven't done that, don't risk your eternity by waiting another day. **Romans 10:9** says, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." **Romans 10:13** further tells us that "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Once you've accepted Christ, you are "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

William Jenkyn said, "To forsake Christ for the world is to leave a treasure for a trifle ... eternity for a moment, reality for a shadow." What will you choose?

12. To end our study, let me ask you this important question. From this book, what are some **"Reasons you have to Rejoice"**?

The Battle Belongs to the Lord!