

The Book of Ephesians – Part Nine

Introduction:

This will be the last installment of the teaching on the Book of Ephesians. And we're going to cover the last chapter, Chapter Six.

Chapter Six is filled with practical instructions on how to live our lives for God.

So let me begin by saying that the terminology "clergy" or "layman" is not found in the Book of Ephesians or anywhere else in scripture.

And in this chapter Paul makes it clear that no matter what we are called to do in this life, we are all called to be full time ministers of the gospel.

We may not all be called to a fivefold ministry but we can take the Word of God and the Spirit of God into our world.

Starting in the home, we are called to be godly fathers, godly mothers and godly children.

In the workforce, all types of people need to be reached so God has called his people into all kinds of professions.

God wants his people to minister to doctors, nurses, lawyers, bankers, teachers, engineers and scientists, men and women in the military, building contractors, craftsmen, salesman, laborers, employees and employers of all kinds.

So the first 9 verses of Ephesians Chapter Six exhort us to follow after God no matter where we are in life, whether we're children, parents, employers or employees.

I. Follow after God (Ephesians 6:1-9)

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

- We learned last week in Chapter Five that believers are called to submit to one another and wives are called to submit to the godly leadership of their husbands.
- But submission requires a level of knowledge. And believers, husbands, and wives who truly understand submission know the reason why it's important.
- However, children, especially young children, don't *know* enough to submit so they are told to obey their parents.
- One day they'll gain the knowledge and wisdom necessary to understand why. Until then they need to be obedient for their own protection.

2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

- Children may not always understand the decisions their parents make. They honor their parents when they obey even when they do not understand why.
- This kind of obedience brings the blessing contained in the next verse which is a quote from **Exodus 20:12**.

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

- The Greek phrase "be well with thee" refers to prosperity and to "live long on the earth" refers to the blessing of divine health.

- You could say it like this “If children honor their parents they will live healthy and prosperous lives.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

- This verse is actually talking to parents in general. Parents should never discipline or correct their children in anger. To do so will only cause anger and bitterness to rise in their hearts.
- Also, parents should never discipline or correct without some kind of explanation as to why. They may not always understand, but at least attempt to explain it to them. One day they *will* understand.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

- The modern day equivalent of servants and masters is employees and employers or even labor and management.
- Christian employees should be the best and hardest working employees of all. If you have a job, you should approach it as if the Lord Jesus himself was your boss.
- However, you need only obey your boss “according to the flesh”. This means to obey them in the natural course of your job. If a boss ever asks you to do something outside the will of God or contrary to scripture, then you should not obey.

6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

- “Not with eyeservice” means that you should work just as hard when the boss is not looking as when he is. After all, you should be doing your job as unto the Lord, and you can be sure he is watching at all times.
- If you need a raise or a promotion, don’t butter up the boss with needless flattery and don’t do things just to make yourself look good in his eyes. This is what is meant by being a “manpleaser”. Again, the Lord is watching and he knows your heart.
- If you work hard with the right attitude and don’t disrespect or talk against your boss, the Lord will see to it that promotion comes your way. It may come to you on your current job or in the form of a better, higher paying job somewhere else.

7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

- The Greek word translated “good will” is the word *eunoia* which means *loyal enthusiasm*.
- Be loyal to your employer and keep your mind on your job. Again, as unto the Lord and not unto men.

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

- Whether you are an employer or an employee, when you do a good deed, you will be rewarded by the Lord.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

- Christian employers should treat their workers better than any other employers. If you are an employer, avoid threatening your employees and never play favorites.
- Treat all of your workers with equality and respect. Keep in mind that in the eyes of the Lord no one person is better than another.
- OK then, verses 10-17 describe the spiritual battle we are called to fight and the Weapons for War that have been given unto us for that purpose.

II. Weapons for War (Ephesians 6:10-17)

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

- This verse transitions us to the final portion of the book of Ephesians.
- If you remember way back when we started this series we started with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- We progressed to the ministry gifts available to the body of Christ and finally to how the body should operate in the world.
- The remaining verses in this chapter summarize how believers in all walks of life must learn to be effective witnesses for the Gospel.

- The word “strong” comes from the Greek word *endunamoo* which means “to empower.”
- The word “power” comes from the Greek word “kratos” which means “ruling or dominating strength or power.”
- So put them all together and we could read verse 10 like this:
- **Finally, my brethren, be empowered by the Lord, and in the dominating strength of his might!**
- That empowerment is given so you can be an effective witness, and so that you can crush the enemy wherever and whenever you encounter him in your life.
- Because, when you decide to really live your life for the Lord you are going to be resisted like never before. Therefore you need to know the weapons that are available to you as a believer.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

- We need to put on the complete armor of God to be able to stand against the strategies of the enemy. These are military terms which are intentionally used by Paul to paint a picture of warfare.
- He’s trying to impress upon the believer that the battle we fight, though not a physical battle is very real and the stakes are very high.

- To stand in this sense of the verse is also a military term. Once we have conquered ground, we are to occupy or hold that ground.
- Jesus told his followers through a parable in **Luke 19:13** that they were to occupy until he comes again.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

- This is a spiritual battle that is fought with spiritual weapons.

I Corinthians 10

4(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

- If we could back up to Verse 12 we can see the hierarchy of the demonic forces that inhabit our atmosphere:
 - "Principalities" (*arche*) are demons and familiar spirits who possess and oppress certain individuals.
 - "Powers" (*exeusia*) are the demonic authorities over these lower level principalities.

- Rulers of the darkness of this “world” (*kosmos*) are the demonic spirits that influence kings, presidents and prime ministers etc.
- Spiritual wickedness in high places are the most powerful and they exercise influence over entire nations.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

- This verse seems pretty similar to verse 11. However, I think there is an important difference. I believe verse 11 tells us to put on the complete armor of God but verse 13 tells us to put it to use. This way you will be able to stand in the day that you are attacked.
- “And having done all” is from the Greek word *katergazomai* which means “something on the inside working its way out”.
- When you are attacked, call upon all that is stored within your inner man, don’t hold anything back. Assuming you have stored something in there, when you do this, the enemy will flee from you.

James 4

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

- “Having your loins girt about with truth” means to keep your belt buckled. The belt of truth is what keeps all your armor in place and functioning properly.

John 17

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

- The breastplate protected the heart and vital organs. “Having on the breastplate of righteousness” means to always be aware of and declaring the righteousness that is in your heart because of Christ. **(II Corinthians 5:21)**

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

- This means we should always be ready to go where and when the Lord tells us to minister the gospel of peace, the gospel of reconciliation. **(II Corinthians 5:18)**

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

- “Fiery darts” is actually better translated “flaming arrows” which the devil will try and destroy us with. But the shield of faith is designed to protect all parts of our being, spirit, soul and body.
- The model was taken from the Roman shield which was door shaped and was large enough to enable the soldier to hide his entire body when under attack, especially by arrows.
- Our faith should rest in the fact that the shield, if used properly, will be able to extinguish *all* the flaming arrows that come our way.

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

- The helmet protects the head which is the seat of the soul. The soul is your mind, your will, your emotions, and your personality.
- The Word of God is the key to saving your souls. To save your soul is to bring it in line with the revelation that your spirit man already has on the inside of you. This will keep your emotions from controlling you and bring true peace to your soul.

James 1

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Isaiah 26

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

- All of the armor discussed up to this point is defensive in nature, but the sword of the Spirit is offensive. We are to take up the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and take the fight to the enemy.

Hebrew 4

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

- The model here was the Roman broadsword which was the most devastating weapon of its day. The Roman broadsword was only 18 inches long with a sharp point and was sharp on both edges.

- It was light and easy to use and allowed the Roman soldiers to attack while maintaining their balance and minimizing their vulnerability to counter attack.
- We shift now to the last part of Chapter Six, verses 18-24, which address the Life of Prayer and the farewell salutation by the Apostle Paul.

III. The Life of Prayer (Ephesians 6:18-24)

- Here Paul makes it clear that we must back up all our actions of spiritual combat with the foundation of prayer.
- Prayer prepares us for the battles ahead, storing in us the things we will need when we go into battle.

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

- A better translation of this verse would be "On every occasion pray with all kinds of prayer and at all times in the Spirit".
- There are different types of prayer; intercession, petition, consecration, thanksgiving, and worship for example. They are to be used when appropriate.
- Sometimes it can be done in our native tongue but many times it needs to be in the Spirit or in tongues.

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

- This verse makes it clear that we are to pray for our spiritual leaders that they may boldly proclaim the gospel.
- You can start by praying for me, your pastor, and for my wife, and for all the leaders that God is raising up to help us boldly preach the Word.
- And please do so, on a regular basis, because we need it.
- Then, of course, pray for other leaders in the Body as you feel led.

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- Even though it landed Paul in prison, he is still praying for more boldness. **(Acts 4:29)**

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

- Tychicus was the one who delivered this letter to the Ephesians.
- Paul is telling them that he will catch them up on how he's doing and when they hear it they'll be encouraged.

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

24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

- Paul ends the letter with an attitude of love. Even though he's in prison, he still cares for the saints and ends the letter with faith, love, grace, and peace.

V. Summary:

I know it's taken us a long time to get through the Book of Ephesians. We've broken it up into sections and spanned a long time starting in May and ending here in August but it's been worth it and it's been an absolute pleasure for me.

I'm going to post the remaining notes that I haven't already posted on the website, Part 7-9, so you can download and listen to the entire podcast series with Bible open and notes in your hand if you really want to dig in and get this down in your heart.

I'll leave them up there for a month or so and then they'll be taken down. I encourage you to take advantage of these materials which cost you nothing but the paper and ink required to download and print them out.

Amen? Amen!