

Rhema Bible Study

Ephesians Chapter 6 Verses 4-9

May 26, 2021

Verse 4

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Paul gave the headship to the husband, and he now gives the responsibility of discipline to the father. This, no doubt, includes the mother, but all under the headship of the father. Parents who are unreasonably strict with their children often drive them from home into early, unwise marriages, juvenile gangs, or into the ranks of the hardcore incorrigibles. No parent should tease or repress children until they are in a rage. Foolishness is indeed bound up in the heart of a child (Proverbs 22:15). Consequently, the rod of correction is needed (Proverbs 13:24; 29:15,17), and a child will not long resent just punishment. Even godly parents are not perfect and will occasionally make mistakes with their children. Children who are loved will not hold this against their parents. But, unjust and continuous abuse (corporeal or verbal) inevitably leads to exasperation and discouragement and will be avoided by godly parents. *Training* means that parents are under divine mandate to train, educate, and chasten their children. Children are not just ours to enjoy and caress, but to train for this life and the life to come. *Admonition* refers to exhortation, urging, and warning. We need to teach our children not only the truth, but to urge them to live by it. Parents will do well to notice the attitude of entreaty and exhortation found in Proverbs chapters 5 and 6

Fathers should strive to be like God the father and when they fail, be honest enough to admit it to their children so that the children don't get the wrong idea about God the father. One way to provoke children to wrath is for a parent to make foolish, petty, demands just to show that they can do it. A child soon learns that those mindless little rules have nothing to do with their parents training and loving them, and since no one likes being a punching bag they will be provoked to anger.

Question...should all punishment include spanking or are there other methods and if so, what are they?

Question...should the mother spank the child when the negative action takes place or wait for the father to come from work to do it?

Question...should a Christian send their children to boarding school or job corps if they are not acting properly?

Verse 5

Servants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ.

The *servants* referred to in these verses were bond-servants or slaves (cf. Colossians 3:22-25). Even though Paul may have disliked the concept of masters and slaves, such was a fact of life in the world in which he lived. Therefore, he felt obligated to give spiritual instruction to those in such positions. This is analogous to the way Moses is represented by Jesus as having given instruction about what a man must do when he divorces his wife (i.e., “because of the hardness of your hearts”) without thereby indicating, as those who asked the question were implying, that Moses approved of or encouraged divorce (cf. Matthew 19:7,8). Furthermore, Paul elsewhere indicates that a slave could properly become free (I Corinthians 7:21), therefore, he does not treat slavery as a divinely ordained institution, as he does that of husband and wife and parent and child. Since many households had parents, children, and slaves, he continues his teaching on having a relationship that will please God. The civil law of that time gave masters authority over their slaves, and slaves were legally bound to obey. When one became a Christian, there may have been the feeling that one was no longer under obligation to obey his master. Paul teaches that the gospel of Christ does not automatically cancel slavery, but it does completely change the estimation of the slaves in the master's eyes.

To the Romans, slaves were generally looked upon only as *things*. To the Christian master, they became *people*, and even *brothers* in the Lord, if the slaves were Christians. Also, Christianity changed the slave's estimation of his master. The service his master required became an opportunity to serve Christ, and to demonstrate the power of Christ in his heart. Lest he should be displeasing to his master the Christian served with the usual “fear and trembling,” but he served even more earnestly lest he should be displeasing to his Lord, who was expecting him to be an obedient slave.

Although slavery has now been outlawed, the obligations of slave and master cannot longer be specifically obeyed. Nevertheless, in all of our earthly relationships, Christ must be the standard of authority. Consequently, one ought to recognize that the general principles articulated in the days of slavery are applicable to the employer/employee relationship.

It doesn't matter who signs the payroll checks, Christians work for Christ. Jesus is our boss. Everything a Christian does at work or at school should be done with the idea that Christ will call them into his office and evaluate their attitude, and effort because one day he will do that.

Question...what should a Christian's response be to an employer who asks them to do something dishonest?

Question...can you treat someone fairly when you consider yourself more important than them?

Verses 6 and 7

Not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

Paul does not stop with asking slaves to obey, but specifies for them to obey “as servants of Christ” and “fearing God” (Colossians 3:22). With Christ as the standard, they will obey even if the master is not kind and good (cf. I Peter 2:18, 19). With Christ as their model, Christian slaves will obey when the master is watching, and when he is not watching. This service will not be affected in any way—it will be absolutely genuine!

God says don't work hard when the boss is watching and then horse around when he is not. A Christian student shouldn't behave only when the teacher is in the room either. This is a command for good character. Character is who we are when no one is watching except God.

Question...what should a Christian's response be to coworkers who “goof off all the time”?

Question...how should a Christian respond to mandatory overtime?

Question...should Christians be members of Unions?

Verse 8

Knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Those who serve with eye-service, as men-pleasers only, will work when the master is watching, but when they can get by with it they will engage in fraud, laziness, deceit, etc. This is not true of the Christian servant. They “Have regard for good things in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:17), and they follow the rule: “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you

will receive the reward of the inheritance” (Colossians 3:23, 24). The Bible says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10). This fact is true whether one is a slave or free!

Our job whether it's at home or outside the home is a ministry unto Christ if we are a Christian. This is why it is so important to always give our best. Number one it's the right thing to do and Jesus deserves it. Number two Jesus promises to reward us. If we are underpaid or underappreciated Jesus will make up the difference. Jesus says that the laborer is worthy of their pay. If a person isn't getting the pay they are worthy of then you can bet that Christ will make sure they get it one way or another. (Minister Michael's Testimony)

Question...should Christians work at companies who sell/distribute alcohol/beer/cigarette products?

Question...should Christians work for employers they know are against Christ?

Question...how should a Christian employer respond to a Christian worker who continues to miss the mark?

Verse 9

And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Masters are under obligation to exercise the same benevolent, conscientious acts toward his slaves that Christ requires of the slave toward the master. He must give up threatening his slaves, knowing that the Lord of both slave and master is in heaven on His throne, and in the judgment that Christ shall conduct upon His servants, He will respect no man's earthly rank or title, but will reward or punish everyone according to his deeds. Those who are obedient and faithful to the Lord will be saved, but those who rebel in sin will be lost (Matthew 25:32-34). (The phrase “giving up threatening” carries the idea of moderating threats, relaxing threats, or omitting threats. Threats often produce more terror and hurt more deeply than stripes and lashings.)

Everyone has a boss. If someone is a boss on earth it is good for them to remember that they have a boss in heaven. They have a boss who is watching how they do their job and how they treat those who are under them. The worker better be treated with the dignity that a human being created in the image and likeness of God deserves. God demands hard work from employees and fairness from

employers. He demands hard work and loyalty from employees and he demands kindness from employers.

Question...should you assume that working for a Christian is better than working for a Non-Christian?

Question...what should a Christian's response be to their business not thriving or surviving?