

The Apostle Paul's Letter to the Church at Ephesus
Pastor Nathan E. Lewis
Part Six

Read Ephesians 5-6

We must not only please God, but also we must build loving relationships, in the church, in our families, and in the marketplace/community.

(6:1-4) Now that the Apostle Paul has addressed the marital relationship, that primary relationship of the family, he addresses the secondary relationship, that of child to parent and parent to child. His main point is still "submission." The way children submit to their parents is in their following the 5th Commandment. The Apostle Paul interprets the 5th Commandment, "*Honor your father and your mother,*" as "*obey your parents.*" Childhood development is defined a little differently in each culture. In the ancient Hebrew world, a child transitioned to adulthood early at 12 years old. In the 20th Century and in present day law, a child transitions to adulthood at 18 through 21 years old. In the 21st century, functionally, we have children in their mid-30's! If you are a child and your basic necessities are still provided by your parents, then you must heed the 5th Commandment as the Apostle Paul interprets it - obey your parents. If you are an independent adult, meaning that you live freely apart from your parents, then the 5th Commandment calls you to respect your parents, to honor them in gratitude for all they have supplied you.

If you are a father, then your least favorite, most convicting verse in the Holy Scriptures may be Ephesians 6:4! There is a fine line between raising your children and harassing your children. Most fathers have crossed the line many times. It's important for children to understand how difficult it is for fathers to navigate this line. Nevertheless, fathers, who have struggled with anger, should understand how important it is for them not to push their children to anger.

The Rx is for fathers to make a clear distinction between their preferences and insisted behaviors and God's commandments binding upon children. Too many father force their wills and preferences upon their children instead of leading their children to submit to God's 10 Commandments as a way toward following Jesus.

Too many children are confused between father and God. A father united to Jesus Christ will point his children to Jesus Christ, to God, patiently and lovingly directing his children to do what is right according to God's law and gospel.

Fathers need to make space for their children's choices, dreams, plans and exploration of life at every stage of maturation. At the same time fathers must train their children - the discipline and instruction belong to the Lord. Being a father is most challenging....and rewarding!

(5-9) It must be said, due to the atrocious oppression and ownership of fellow human beings, that "*slave,*" in this paragraph refers to a human being, who has submitted to work for another human being, to expand another's estate and business. Anyone, who was indebted to another person in Paul's world, was a slave. And so, the correlation in our world would be as follows: 1) Anyone who owes someone else, including a bank or some other institution; 2) Anyone employed by another to complete work for a wage or toward his/her financial freedom. In a first century community, slaves were members of their master's household - "*oikos.*" They were

legally the same as the master's children, under his care and working to expand his estate. A slave had the choice to work toward his/her independence or could make the decision to continue in the employment of the master - what we would call in most contemporary instances as an "employer or boss." In the Roman Empire and in surrounding nations and communities oppressive slavery did exist - treating servants as property without any hope of independence. This kind of slavery, like American slavery is not endorsed by the Apostle Paul or the New Testament.

(1) // (6)

both children and slaves submit = *OBEY*

In Acts 16 in the city of Philippi, the Apostle Paul interacts with two households - *oikos*:

The first household belongs to a woman! - Lydia, a wealthy business woman.

The second household belongs to a man - The Jailer.

both children and slaves were in the same category in their households - dependents of the master, regardless of gender.

(5) Slaves are to obey their masters, "*with fear and trembling*," and "*with a sincere heart*," for at least two reasons, though Paul only supplies one reason - "*as you would Christ*." A Christian slave, who has submitted to Christ, displays his/her submission by obeying the earthly master. The other reason, unnamed, most likely because it is obvious, is that refusal to submit, would result in dire consequences for the slave - like being fired and turned out of the *oikos* to find another home and job.

The slave is to obey sincerely - not merely paying lip service. After all, the master is supplying the slaves basic necessities of life and the opportunity to establish oneself in his/her own estate. Many slaves were what we call "apprentices," learning their master's trade. Once the term of apprenticeship was completed, then the apprentice had the choice to start his/her own business/trade or continue to work for the master/employer.

"*with a sincere heart*," in (5) is expanded in (6-8) - a slave is not to be a "*people-pleaser*," that is, merely doing his/her job when the boss is looking, but all the time, as "*servants of Christ*," who is always observing. In doing so, the slave does God's will, not merely the earthly master's will. The slave is to do his work to the best of his/her ability, executing his/her personal will in serving the Lord through doing the work tasked by the earthly master. (Most of us reading this paragraph in the 21 century are "slaves," and so Paul's instruction is for us.)

Lydia - independently wealthy, master - not a slave

The Jailer - government worker - slave, subject to a master/institution

% of Americans who work for the government (see chart on next page)

Only 1 in 10 Americans own their own businesses - 13 million owners.

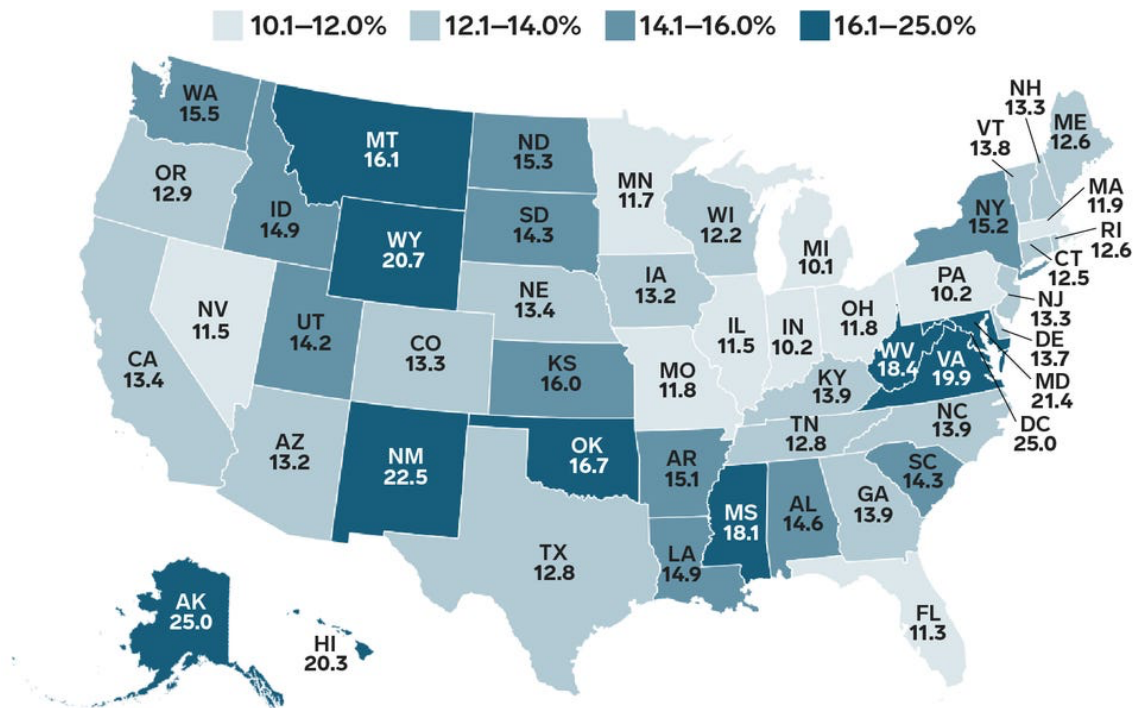
The Apostle Paul Does not Endorse Oppressive Slavery!

1776 - 1865...600,000 slaves imported to the USA

2016 Worldwide - 3.8 million women and children slaves of sex trafficking

24.9 million worldwide in forced labor

Percent share of employed population over the age of 16 who work in government



Source: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey

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(8) Whether a Christian is a slave or free, he/she can be assured that God will reward his/her good work.

(9) All masters also answer to God! Just as God rewards the good work of a slave or independent person, so a master must also reward the good work of everyone who works for him/her. The master is not to threaten his employees, laborers, anyone under his/her employment. God shows no partiality - both slave and master are highly valued as human beings made in the image of God. Christian masters especially ought to reflect their submission to God in the fair treatment of all who work for them.

The Whole Armor of God - Ephesians 6: 10-20

It is true that God graciously and lovingly accepts us as weak, sinful, complicated and broken people. The church is a hospital (according to St. Augustine). The gospel is the good news that such people, like us all, are transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, toward an ever increasing strength and productivity to the glory of God. Our strength does not come from our own ingenuity, will, character, reputation or moral fiber. Our strength is a gracious and powerful work of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul describes our strength as *“the whole armor of God,”* that which we *“put on.”* United to Jesus Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, and embraced by the Father’s love, we can stand against the greatest evil and powers imaginable in this world and beyond. We can do so only as we are clothed with divine gifts - our armor. On the next page, I have supplied you with a diagram of *“the whole armor of God.”*

Take Up the Whole Armor of God:

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can make your stand against the devil's schemes." (Ephesians 6:11)



The Helmet of Salvation

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

The Breastplate of Righteousness

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Shield of Faith

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

Loins Girded with Truth

"Buy the truth and do not sell it—wisdom, instruction and insight as well." (Proverbs 23:23)

The Sword of the Spirit

"For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

Feet Shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15)

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Are you bored yet? Below are some artistic conversation starters:



“Searching for God”
Frederico Clapis



“Chained”
Miles Johnston



“Suspension”
Nicholas Lavaranne

“Ego”
Stephane Graff

(far right)
“In a Cage”
David Shrigley



Idaho History Trivia Quiz

How Much do You Know about Idaho?

Submit your answers by mailing them to Pastor Nathan
28381 Hwy. 18
Parma, ID 83660

A prize and correct answers for everyone who submits

- 1.** Who was assassinated outside his Caldwell home on December 30, 1905?
- 2.** What is the approximate population of Idaho State?
- 3.** What is the largest employer in Idaho?
- 4.** How many miles of the Oregon Trail are within the boundaries of Idaho State?
- 5.** Which Clint Eastwood movies was filmed in Idaho?
- 6.** What is the official dance of Idaho?
- 7.** What is Idaho State's motto and what does it mean?
- 8.** What is the mascot of the best university in Idaho?
- 9.** Who is the founder of the College of Idaho?
- 10.** Who is the founding minister of Sterry Memorial Presbyterian Church?
- 11.** Which Idaho town is the "First City in the World to be Lit by Atomic Power"?
- 12.** How many Basque live in Idaho?
- 13.** How many LDS temples are in the state of Idaho?
- 14.** What is the name of Idaho's present Governor?
- 15.** Who are Idaho's present two U.S. Senators?
- 16.** Who is the mayor of Parma, Idaho?
- 17.** What is JUMP in Boise?
- 18.** Which town was the first Capital of Idaho?
- 19.** Where is your favorite location/place in Idaho?

