

Ephesians

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[0 : 00] Well, if you will look at your scripture sheet, we are currently engaged in Ephesians chapter 6. And as I reminded you in our last session, we would encourage you to, for the sake of interpretation and understanding, avoid all of the chapter divisions that you find there because very often they are misleading and they destroy the continuity.

The most valuable thing that the chapter and verse divisions contribute to our study of the Bible is simply for the purpose of locating the text.

And for that, of course, it is very, very valuable. I cannot imagine a preacher on a Sunday morning telling his congregation, Now, would you turn about halfway through Isaiah and see if you can find that portion and we'll start reading.

No, we don't have to do that. We've got chapter and verse and we can locate the text quickly. However, chapter and verse divisions didn't even exist about 500 years ago.

So they are all man-made. And when it comes to the study of scriptures, we ought to learn to ignore the chapter divisions because they often disturb the continuity. Such is the case here.

[1 : 14] Between chapters 5 and chapter 6, the continuity is disrupted. And we ought to keep in mind that there is a flow. There is a continuation of the theme that Paul began in chapter 5.

And that had to do with be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but we are to be filled or continually being filled with the Spirit. And if we are filled with the Spirit of God as opposed to walking in the flesh, then we will produce the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, meekness, all of these things will be the natural outgrowth or the fruit that comes from the filling of the Spirit.

And principal ways that that will manifest itself. If a husband is filled with the Spirit, he will love his wife sacrificially as Christ loved the church.

That means he puts her needs and her safety and her welfare ahead of his. In the same way that Christ put the needs of the church ahead of his own needs.

[2 : 34] In that he loved the church and gave himself for it. And if a wife is filled with the Spirit, she will have a submissive spirit to the leadership of her husband without feeling like a second-class citizen or anything of the kind.

She will respond to her husband's sacrificial love with full cooperation and understanding that God has placed him in the position of headship in that family.

And, where we have a breakdown in the continuity here, if a child or a parent is filled with the Spirit, they will, according to verse 1 of chapter 6, children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth. Now, a child, and believe it or not, a child is capable of being filled with the Spirit.

Anyone, anyone who is capable of responding to salvation through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, anyone who is capable of responding to salvation as a young child is also capable of being filled with the Spirit.

[4 : 02] And that simply means a life that is yielded and dedicated to the will and the Spirit of God, as opposed to yielding to the flesh.

And we've spent a lot of time in Romans 6 explaining what the flesh is and how that operates. So, the directive for a child is, and here Paul is covering the whole waterfront, mother, father, and offspring.

And the directive for a child is, children are to obey your parents in the Lord. And you are to honor your father and your mother, which is the first commandment with promise, and we've talked a little bit about that, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.

And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This is a big ticket item in our culture today, because there is tremendous disintegration of families taking place all around us.

And Christian families have not escaped this. There are a lot of Christian families in chaos, because the filling of the Spirit is not present in that family.

[5 : 23] There's a lot of walking in the flesh, and it produces the activities of the flesh. And you have divisiveness, disruption, dysfunction, in a lot of Christian families that ought not to exist.

And by the way, everybody knows, everybody knows, that there are some very unhappy Christian families in church every Sunday morning.

And that's a tragedy. They can put on a front and smile and shake hands and give the impression that everything is wonderful, but no sooner do they get to the parking lot and start driving away, and the arguing and the fussing and everything begins.

And this ought not to be so among those who name the name of Christ, because God has called us to peace, and no one is in a position to enjoy that peace more than the believers.

But it all begins with this being filled with the Spirit. Fathers who are, will not provoke their children to wrath. And this is a very easy thing to do.

[6 : 33] You know, I think, and of course there are exceptions, there are always exceptions, but within just about, well I would say probably within most families.

And I'm talking about mother, father, and children. And again, I want to emphasize it isn't always this way. Sometimes it's the reverse. But very often it is the father who is perhaps more rigid, more demanding, more of a disciplinarian, and may tend to be a little harder on the kids.

And mom often comes in as the buffer, as the one who is softer and who tones down the overbearing nature that a dad may have.

And one reason that a dad may be that way is because he keenly senses the responsibility that is his for things going the way they should in that family.

And he recognizes that he is under divine authority to see to it that that family is disciplined, that it fulfills its responsibilities and so on.

[7 : 43] So there is a degree of pressure and obligation that is imposed upon the father because he is the head. And the head doesn't just mean that you're in charge, but it means that you take the responsibility for leadership.

And it is an awesome thing, a tremendous privilege, and a tremendous responsibility to be the father of a family.

God has great expectations of the father, but he makes no expectations from the father that he has not already enabled the father to fulfill.

And sometimes discipline is the prerogative of the father. How many times have the kids heard this? You just wait until your father gets home.

Because very often he is a discipliner. Now sometimes, as I mentioned, there are exceptions. Sometimes it's the reverse. Sometimes dad is the softy, and the mother is the one who is more of a disciplinarian.

[8 : 55] But by and large, it usually works the other way. And in either case, the kids need to be responsive to discipline. And when the writer of Hebrews talks about if you endure chastening, if you endure not chastening, that is child training, that all of us are subject to, then are ye bastards and not sons.

And that's pretty plain language. And the principle is that a father does not discipline the neighbor's children because they're not his children. They're not his responsibility.

But he disciplines his own. And the father who claims to love his children and lets them ride roughshod over everything is doing them no favors.

In fact, he is negligent of one of his primary responsibilities. But he is to do this, he is to discipline his children without creating resentment in them.

And sometimes that can be a fine line, particularly where there are multiple children involved. Because one child may be much more responsive to discipline than another.

[10 : 13] And we all know of cases where if a child gets out of line, all dad has to do is give them that look, that stern look.

And boy, they snap too right now. They get the message. And yet, that child may have a brother who is impervious to the strong looks.

You've got to take that kid to the woodshed because he does not respond to a stern look. That's just the difference in kids. And I know there are a lot of parents who sometimes swear there had to be a mix-up at the hospital because our kids are so different.

I can't believe that this is my son and that this is my son. And how can they be so different? Well, that's just the nature of humanity. And that's the way sometimes the DNA works out. But this principle of discipline is very, very important.

And to be able to discipline without creating resentment in the child is a big, big item. And it's one that we could all use. We could all use a refresher course in, I suppose, because it gets very delicate.

[11 : 24] Because, you know, a child, regardless of their age, a child knows if they are being treated unfairly.

And that's what creates the resentment. They just sense that they either have it coming or they don't have it coming. And this discipline, this discipline can be as extreme, as I mentioned, as taking them to the woodshed or just a firm look.

And this is something that we've gotten away from, really. And I say this to the detriment of our whole nation. Because the writer of Proverbs talks about disciplining a child and the rod of correction will drive this foolishness far from him.

And we've pretty much gotten away from that. So that we do not use corporal punishment or spanking anymore. And that's considered outmoded. There are some who even consider it unkind and unwise and unnecessary and completely unjustifiable.

And there are those who would equate spanking a child with child abuse. Which is ridiculous. Now, nobody, for the record, nobody is more opposed to child abuse than yours truly.

[12 : 48] And we see all kinds of horror stories of children being brought to emergency rooms where an irate father has over-disciplined and has really injured the child so much that they need medical treatment.

There is absolutely no excuse for that. No justification for that at all. And my sentiment is the judge ought to throw the book at him. And don't you see this stuff in the newspapers all the time?

And so many times with the breakdown of our families and divorce or couples living together without marriage, there seems to be invariably step-parents or live-in boyfriends.

and we read about these things all the time where children are abused by live-in mates, live-in boyfriends, and sometimes it even results in the death of a child and the prosecution of the individual.

And this is all symptomatic of family breakdowns and disruptions that are occurring in our nation. And a lot of that has to do with living together without marriage, not understanding what marriage is, no-fault divorce, all of these things make a negative contribution to the disintegration of the American family and we are paying a horrible, horrible price for it.

[14 : 15] So Paul is addressing this that we are not to provoke our children to rap. And you do that by making unreasonable or unfair demands on a child that causes resentment to begin building up in the heart and mind of the child and the more they resent the more undisciplined they become, the more difficult they become because they are acting out of their resentment and it is kind of like a get even a you can't make me this kind of thing.

I remember hearing this story about a two-year-old was in his high chair and he kept standing up in the high chair and mother was afraid that he was going to fall topple over and she went over and just gently pushed his shoulders, pushed him back down into the high chair and went about her business and she turned around and looked over again and he was standing up again and she was scared he was going to fall right over in a hard floor there and fracture his skull so she went over and she said I said sit down and she pushed him back down in the chair firmly and he started crying and she turned around and walked away next time she looked at him he was wiping his tears and he said mommy I'm sitting down on the inside on the outside but on the inside I'm standing up and that's that old nature you know that's that you can't make me type thing that the spirit of defiance that is part and parcel of the human being we are just made that way we want our own way and if you get in my way of my having my own way

I'll deal with you however I can and that's just old Adam talking and that's exactly what Paul was talking about here provoke not your children to wrath don't don't treat your children in such a way that they will want to retaliate that they will want to get even that they will hold it against you because that's what creates barriers between people fathers and sons and mothers and sons as well but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and if you will recall the text that we are using here if you will look the bold black type is the King James version that's the lead text and then those that follow are like for the ASV is the American Standard version the TCNT is the 20th Century New Testament and the CON is Coney Bear's Translation and each one of them renders the statement in just a little different way nurture them in the chastening and admonition chastening chastening according to the scriptures is not punishment chastening is child training it is a positive correction rather than punishment and that's an important thing to keep in mind because what we want to do is train that child through our chastening so that they grow up to be a responsible mature well adjusted individual because none of us has the right to inflict an adult brat on society and we've got a whole bunch of adult brats out there running around and they were created that way from childhood largely because they were undisciplined bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the

Lord any questions or comments anybody have anything to add feel free yes you talked about the difference between the mother and the father others and I think there's a place for both of them and the fear makes a good fear kind of big top dad top thing and sometimes they need sometimes they need to be punished and sometimes they just need control and it's that combination you mentioned the way your father comes home I heard that a term the kind of kid I was and the punishment wasn't my dad didn't like the punishment although sometimes he did but quite often my waiting in my bedroom before he came home that was a punishment yeah yeah oh yeah oh that's very important absolutely absolutely and you know it's not coincidental that God has seen fit to use two people to create a human being the male and the female and each plays a specific role that the other cannot play and sometimes they are put in a position like a single mother where she has to try to fill both roles and that must be a virtually impossible undertaking

I just can't imagine that there is the need in the heart and mind of the child for feminine input and for masculine input and that balance needs to be maintained and it is very very critical and I think that there is a real toll to be taken where a child is deprived of either mother or father and it doesn't mean that they're doomed to failure but it does mean that they're going to have obstacles and difficulties to overcome that a two parent child may not have and it is within the divine wisdom that God saw fit for femininity and masculinity to come together to produce that child because each one has something really distinct and unique to offer that child and the child needs both and I'm going to resist the temptation of getting into the same-sex marriage which I call just

[21 : 00] JPN that's my abbreviation for it's just plain nuts so we won't go there but that too is involved by the way and it's a very very critical thing other thoughts or anybody might have yeah Ron know in case of fear pressure and the kids were starting and all that stuff when the class went back and watched his dad would do it and went home with the mirroring because he snaked it out I don't know what I would have or not because they saw it the time he was the tough one so he had to do is talk to him a little turn and he is now only you know he Yeah.

Yeah. Well, we had a real difference with our two kids. Of course, the third, the baby, was mentally retarded.

And many of you remember Dawn, Dawn Elizabeth. She passed away at 30. She was about five years old mentally, but she was never really a discipline problem. But we had a world of difference between Tim and Lynette.

Yes. And Tim was our firstborn, and he was the one that you could tell him what you wanted to do or what you didn't want him to do. He would agree with everything you said and was very compliant, and then he would go and do as he pleased.

And Lynette, Lynette was our little family firecracker. She would fight you on any restriction or any demand tooth and nail.

[22 : 39] And she would get in your face and argue and carry on and whatnot. And then she would end up complying and doing it after she thought it through.

And that was the radical difference between the two. And Barbara had the good sense to see through both of them. And I think mothers tend to pick up on things in their children in ways that dads don't.

It just kind of goes over dad's head. But she spends so much time with them, not only birthing them and carrying them, but women tend to be more relational than men.

And again, there are exceptions, but it's the wife that usually picks up on things first that the husband may be completely oblivious to.

Doesn't hear it, doesn't see it, doesn't sense it. And she's on it. And she gets the picture and she's able to address it in ways that guys aren't. And again, that's part of the dynamic and part of the divine wisdom that God has placed and planted in the family.

- [23 : 52] Because that's needed from both directions. And happy is the home that has a well-adjusted mother and a well-adjusted father and well-adjusted children.
- That's a functional family. Someone said, we've got so many dysfunctional families today, I'm beginning to wonder what a functional family would look like. And they've got a point.
- But let me just close this segment by saying this, fellas. The greatest gift, the greatest gift that you can give to your children is to be deeply in love with your wife so that the children know that full well and have no doubts about it.
- That's the greatest gift you can give to your kids is to love their mother in a way that is obvious to them. And then you're on your way to a fulfilled family.
- Any other thoughts or comments before we go into the servant aspect? Yes, Raj? Oh, yeah.
- [25 : 20] Yeah, I've seen that. I've seen that a number of times. And it's not at all uncommon for a child to be reared in a godly home, in church, in Sunday school every Sunday.
- And then all of a sudden, when they graduate from high school or go away to college, they just kind of lose interest, kind of fall away from the church. Partly this may be due to peer pressure.
- It may be due to what takes place in academia. And if they are in a secular school, university, et cetera, they will get 95% negative input from that surrounding and very little from godly input.
- And I cannot emphasize enough how beneficial it is if children can be educated in a Christian college, Christian university, that kind of setting.
- I know that that's maybe not for everybody. But in my estimation, it certainly is preferable. And their views are strengthened. And they are edified and built up in the most holy faith, as Paul says, as opposed to sitting under some of the ungodly professors who delight in denigrating Christianity and tearing down the faith and so on.
- [26 : 41] We all know that that goes on. And there are, across this nation, there are literally thousands of professors who are flat out admitted atheists who have no use for spiritual things, for the Bible, for Christianity, or anything else.
- And these people are usually very well educated, very articulate, and they present a very commanding case. And kids are influenced by this. And there have been a lot of Christian kids leave the church and leave a godly home and go off to the university only to announce after their first year in school that I no longer believe that stuff.
- And they've been influenced by their peers and by the faculty in some of these schools. And Ken Ham is very big on this. I know. And he's talking, he's even written a book called *Already Gone*.
- And he's talking about how children can be brought up in the church in the Sunday school. And then when they hit the late teenage years or get married or whatever, they just fall away or go to school and fall away from the faith.
- And in many instances, they were never adequately prepared in the church to be able to answer the onslaught questions that are posed by those who have no respect for Christianity or the Bible.
- [28 : 06] And their faith is compromised and they just kind of fall by the wayside. Some cases they do come back, especially after they have spent a few years out living life as it is.
- They learn that some of the old ways they learn, maybe they're not so corny after all, and they return to that. And that happens too in a number of cases. So I'm sure there are plenty of examples of that that many can attest to.

Yes, Dana? That pretty much describes me. And I wouldn't say that I let it spread by school or whatever, but I grew up in a religious home and I had the upbringing, and I accepted it.

But when I got out on my own, I would have called myself a Christian, but I didn't really buy into everything. And later on, you've got to watch the listen, and that's what it comes down to.

Everybody has to make up their own mind at some point, and if you don't fall away, it helps you come back. And I know that I felt comfortable in the church, and I had a sense of it, but it's, yeah, it's just happening.

[29 : 26] And then at some point, I made up my mind, I do believe in this, and I started growing in the faith, but it's, if you just grow in a Christian home, and then just go along with it, if you really made up your mind.

Yeah, well, there's strengths both ways. I appreciate that. And you know, one of the great dangers is, and we ought to address this, one of the great dangers of a child growing up in a Christian home is that they can adopt, they can adopt their parents' position, their parents' doctrine, the church doctrine, etc., but it isn't real, and it isn't personal to them.

They just, they just buy into it that, that I'm a Christian because, I grew up in a Christian family. Well, that doesn't make you a Christian. Someone has said, God has children, but he has no grandchildren.

And, your faith has to be your faith. It cannot be that you are a Christian because your parents were Christians. No, no. No, no.

This is a personal thing. It's an individual thing. And, and, if you have, if you have a faith that is merely your parents' faith, then it does not belong to you.

[30 : 41] It needs to be something that you have embraced personally. Joe? I was talking about, I was talking about, I was talking about, he said I had a whole story to tell, but, I was influenced, by different people.

Sure. I love that, that they evangelize, you know what I mean? Yeah. Because of their influence. Yeah. Pastors, other people. Absolutely. Family, my wife's family.

Yeah. Each other type of people. Good. I appreciate that. And, and let me close with this because the food is here, but this is, this is a really important point. There are a lot of parents, and I've talked with a number of them over the last 50 years.

There are a lot of parents who are beating themselves to death. Because, their adult children, aren't in church, or aren't serving the Lord, and, they are perplexed, and they feel tremendous guilt, because they say, I don't know where we went wrong.

We had them in church every Sunday, and we had them in Sunday school, and we did this, and we did that, and we had the family altar, and we had devotions, and everything, and now, the kids, seem to have just scrapped all of that, and they've gone their own way, and I don't know where we went wrong.

[31 : 53] Where did we fail? And, I remember one time hearing a focus on the family, and Dr. Dobson was talking to a couple, and it was a recording that they had experienced this very thing.

They'd poured their heart and soul into these kids raising them, and then when they grew up and got away from home, they just seemed to have little or no interest in it, and they were taking on all this guilt.

You know, where did we fail? What did we do wrong? And, Dr. Dobson pointed out to them, he said, you've got to understand that, regardless of the influence, and the care and attention that you pour into your children, they still have a mind of their own.

They have a will of their own. They have a volition. And, be comforted by the fact, that the first people on the face of the earth, had an absolutely perfect parent, who did everything right.

And, his two children still went wrong. And, there, that volition thing comes in. We have a will. And, the first and most major consequence, perhaps, as a result of the fall, are disobedience, and rejection of the authority of God.

[33 : 06] The first and most major consequence, is the self-centeredness, that ensues from that. Never forget that, guys, because that's a very, very big item. Before, before they succumbed to temptation, and disobeyed God, God, was the center, was the core, of Adam and Eve's, life.

Everything was vested, in God. And, when they rejected Him, and went their own way, they transferred, the core of their being, from God, to themselves.

And, that is self-centeredness. That's the ego, the self-will, that we are all, infected with, as a result, of Adam's fall. And, we are all partakers of that.

It's a really important concept, to keep in mind. Anything else, before we close? Anybody? Okay, thank you for being here, this morning. Enjoy your breakfast.