

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS



11. Godly Relationships (2)

Introduction

We have been created by God to live in relationship with one another. In his letter Paul gives us guidelines on how to live out these relationships, beginning with the relationship between a husband and wife. He then goes on to speak about children and their parents, and finally employees and their employers. In this study we will look at these last two relationships.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 6:1-9

3. The relationships between children and parents 6:1-4

† What are the two key words we should remember in our relationship with our parents? V1-2

(Obedience and honor or respect.)

† What are the two reasons given for treating our parents like this? V1-3

- (1. It is right as it obeys God's command. This is the fifth commandment in Exodus 20:12.*
- (2. So that it may go well with us and we will enjoy a long life on this earth.)*

† When we become adults our relationship with our parents changes and yet we are to always honor them. How do we do that when we may not agree with everything they want us to do? Discuss.

We have all come from different family backgrounds and not all parents have set good examples. However we are always to show respect, because they are our parents, although as adults we must obey what the Lord tells us to do. Paul then moves on to speak about how parents are to raise their children.

† Why do you think v4 is addressed specifically to fathers?

(Ultimately it is the father's responsibility as head of the family to discipline, train and instruct the children.)

The word used in verse 4 means to exasperate or provoke, or to over-correct. Perhaps there is a greater danger of a father doing this. However there is a warning if a father does this.

† What is that danger and what effect will it have on a child if he is constantly over-corrected? Also see Colossians 3:21.

(The children may become discouraged and rebel.)

† Sadly in this world we are seeing great rebellion and disregard for authority. And it begins in the home!

What are the 'ingredients' to raise Godly children? Share from these verses and also from your experience.

4. The relationships between employees and employers 6:5-9

After speaking about the relationship between children and their parents, Paul goes on to write about the relationship between slaves and their masters. At that time there were about 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire, and they were often treated cruelly and had no rights of their own. Although we are not slaves, there are some important principles we can learn from these verses.

- † What is the key word for the slave or employee? V5-6 Is there any situation we may face where it would not be right to obey our employer? Discuss.

(The key word is obey. If our employer asks us to do something that we know is wrong, we need to obey God!)

- † What should our attitude be towards our employer or boss? Why is this important? V5-8, Colossians 3:23-24

(We should treat them with respect and sincerity, and work whole heartedly, whether they are looking or not. Our attitude towards them shows what our attitude to Jesus truly is like, since we are serving him. When we work like this we will be rewarded and receive an inheritance from the Lord.)

- † If you are the boss or you are in charge of others in your workplace, how are you to treat them? What reason does Paul give for treating them well? V9

(You are not to threaten those under you. Here on earth you may be the boss, but God doesn't show favoritism. He will treat us all equally and we are to do the same.)

Whether we are an employee or employer, our attitudes and motives are important to God. Ultimately we are serving him and should seek to gain his approval, realizing he is our true Master and Lord.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the book of Ephesians we learnt about the wonderful riches we have in Christ and that we are seated with him in Heavenly places. However we are living here on earth! We are living with others! The blessings we have received should make a difference to our relationships with those around us. This includes our relationship as husband and wife, our relationships with our parents and children, and with our employer or employees. The way we live out these relationships is really the proof that our relationship with God is genuine.