

## EPHESIANS 6:1-9

In Ephesians 5, Paul spends a lot of time talking about love - what love looks like, what walking in love means, what the implications of love are, etc. He finishes chapter 5 explaining what that means for marriage, and what marriage is ultimately about.

But the implications of love do not stop there - case in point, marriage often leads to children. How does love speak into the relationship between parents and children? And beyond that, love speaks into other relationships as well. It may seem odd, but Paul addresses how love impacts the relationship between masters and bondservants as well. It is telling that he adds that discussion to a discussion about family, but we'll get there when we get there.

Needless to say, love is an incredibly important concept that should be one of the main motivators in our lives, and it should impact every relationship we have. But it is not just any love, it is a specific kind of love. It is a love defined by God, not a love defined however we want.

It is the way Paul, who wrote Ephesians, defines it in another letter:

**1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (4)** *Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant (5) or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; (6) it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. (7) Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (8) Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. (ESV)*

But before we get started, I want you to read our entire passage.

Now, read Colossians 3:18-4:1.

Notice any similarities? Write them down for later.

1. Paul gets right to the point in verse 1
  - a. Who is Paul addressing?
  - b. What does he tell them?
  - c. The phrase "in the Lord" might mean a few different things. What do you read that "stipulation" to mean?
  - d. Define "obey" (or "obedience")
  - e. How important is obedience? Read:
    - i. Deuteronomy 12:28
    - ii. Deuteronomy 28 (yes, the whole chapter, or enough of it to get the gist)
    - iii. Matthew 28:16-20
    - iv. John 3:36
    - v. Romans 2:6-11
  - f. Finally, from verse 1, what reason does Paul give that children should obey their parents?
2. In verses 2 and 3, Paul recalls the ten commandments
  - a. The ten commandments are found in Deuteronomy 5:6-21
  - b. What is the command for children in Ephesians 6:2?
  - c. What is the promise in verse 3?
  - d. Define *honor*
  - e. Why would God tie honoring parents to "living long in the land"?
3. In verse 4, while still on the topic of children honoring their parents, Paul shifts his focus

- a. Who does he address in verse 4?
  - b. What is the command he gives them?
  - c. Read Colossians 3:20-21
  - d. Define *provoke* (some translations use *exasperate* or *stir up*, so define whatever word your particular translation uses there)
  - e. Why is it important that he addresses them and not the mothers?
  - f. Whose job is it to lead in this way, and what is that job?
  - g. What does this tell you about God as Father?
    - i. Do another bible search for passages about God as father and write down some of them that give you comfort. Keep these verses in mind as you go through your days!
4. In verse 5, Paul switches his audience again
- a. Who is Paul addressing in verse 5?
  - b. Paul brings this up in the context of a marriage relationship and parents and children. Does this seem out of place here? Why do you suppose Paul would address this relationship here as well?
  - c. What is his command for them?
  - d. How are they to do this?
    - i. Colossians 3:22
    - ii. ... *with fear and trembling* ...
      1. 2 Corinthians 7:12-16
      2. Philippians 2:12-13
      3. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
      4. Psalm 2:10-12
      5. Luke 12:4-7
      6. What is the kind of fear and trembling Paul is talking about here?
    - iii. ... *with a sincere heart* ...
      1. 1 Timothy 1:3-7
      2. Hebrews 10:19-25
  - e. Who are they to serve in this way for ultimately?
5. In verses 6 and 7, Paul gets practical in how this type of service looks
- a. First, a *not*. What is that not?
    - i. Matthew 6:1-8
    - ii. Matthew 6:16-18
  - b. What does Paul mean by *people pleaser*?
    - i. Galatians 1:6-10
  - c. Rather, how are we to regard ourselves?
    - i. 1 Corinthians 7:20-24
  - d. Who should we seek to please? How can we do this?
    - i. Romans 8:5-8
    - ii. 1 Cor 1:20-24
    - iii. Micah 6:6-8
  - e. ... *doing the will of God from the heart* ...
    - i. What is the will of God?
      1. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
      2. Romans 12:1-2
      3. Matthew 6:9-13
      4. Romans 9:14-20

- f. ... *rendering service with a good will* ...
    - i. What does God judge when we do His will – our work or our motives?
    - ii. How is that encouraging to you?
  - g. ... *as to the Lord and not to men*
    - i. Paul puts an exclamation point on how we are to serve, who we are to serve, why we are to serve Him, and for what reason.
    - ii. As you think about what you do, do you believe that you work to serve the Lord in whatever you do? Do you labor for the Lord?
  - h. Read Colossians 3:23
6. In verse 8, Paul encourages the bondservants he is speaking to
- a. Regardless of how their master treats them, no matter what they do or don't receive from their earthly masters, what do they receive from the Lord?
  - b. What motivation do we have in serving the Lord when times are hard or we are under persecution?
  - c. Paul regards bondservant and free the same way in Christ
    - i. Galatians 3:25-29
  - d. Read Psalm 62
  - e. Read Colossians 3:24
7. Finally, in verse 9, Paul switches his audience one more time
- a. Who is he addressing now?
  - b. What command does he give them?
  - c. What does he tell them to stop doing?
    - i. Leviticus 25:39-43
    - ii. Colossians 4:1
  - d. Why should they do this?

In this passage, Paul has both told us and shown us how love should manifest itself in our relationships and our service. We cannot serve God without love. But beyond even that, he shows us that true service to God is not so much what we do, but why we do it and who we do it for.

The gospel, at its core, is a victory to proclaim. And the victory we proclaim is Christ and Him crucified.

**1 Corinthians 15:1–11 (1)** Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, **(2)** and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. **(3)** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, **(4)** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, **(5)** and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. **(6)** Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. **(7)** Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. **(8)** Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. **(9)** For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **(10)** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. **(11)** Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. **(ESV)**

We cannot do God's will without this, we can't even know God's will without this.

The gospel is the beginning and end of the Christian life. Proclaim the victory and claim the promise, and seek to live and work for Jesus!